

... I order: ... 3.

By July 1, 1941, mask all airfield facilities in relation to the background of the terrain. 4. By July 1, 1941, camouflage tents in the camps of air units.

5. At camp airfields, aircraft should be dispersed under natural and artificial shelters, along the outskirts of the airfield, not allowing them to be placed in straight lines ...

So, a huge grouping, numerically many times superior to the enemy, is deployed at hundreds of airfields. All dispersal and camouflage orders have been issued. Actions on combat alert have been worked out many times. In many air units on the night of June 22, 1941, the alarm was announced BEFORE the appearance of the first German aircraft. Everything is like in the song..

And if a seasoned enemy climbs in on us, He  
will be beaten - everywhere and everywhere ...

## Chapter

### 24 HOW IT WAS - 1

The reader who has had the strength and patience to read hundreds of previous pages should already have a clear idea of the quantitative parameters of the Soviet Air Force grouping: the number of regiments, aircraft, airfields and flight crews. There was only one way to solve a problem of such magnitude as the destruction of the air forces of the western districts with one first strike: the massive use of nuclear missile weapons. But the Germans didn't have it yet. There were also no conventional weapons in sufficient quantities to strike at the same time on most of the airfields in the western districts. There were not even such forces that the Luftwaffe could concentrate on May 10, 1940 on the 300-kilometer front of the invasion of Belgium and France. It is worth noting that the greatest criminal and adventurer himself understood and even aloud admitted the exorbitance of his plan: **"... boundless expanses make it necessary to concentrate troops at decisive points. A massive introduction of aviation and tanks into battle is required in a decisive place. With such a huge space, the Luftwaffe is not able** (here and below it is highlighted by me. - *M.S.*) **to simultaneously process it in its entirety; at the beginning of the war, it can only dominate parts of a gigantic front .... "** (12) The destruction of "the entire aviation of the western

districts" in the first hours of the war could not be, because it could never be. The most that the Luftwaffe command hoped to achieve was to cover from the air the shock tank groups "in the decisive places of the gigantic front." The success achieved in reality exceeded the most daring expectations of the Hitlerite leadership. When the numbers of Soviet aircraft found on the ground exceeded two thousand, G. Goering himself (a fat and nasty, but still military pilot of the First World War) instructed a specially created commission to inspect the captured airfields in order to verify the reliability of the reports of German commanders ...

What happened in the first hours and days of the war?

The greatest losses in the first hours were suffered by the Air Force of the Western Front. By the end of the first day of the war, losses here reached 738 aircraft, with losses on the ground - 528 aircraft and in the air - 210.

This is the classic version of Soviet historiography (the truthful newspaper Pravda of December 6, 1966 is quoted above) Fundamental monograph by M.N. Kozhevnikova (27) gives an important clarification to these figures: ***"9 SAD lost 347, 10 SAD - 180, 11 SAD - 127 aircraft ... During the day, the enemy destroyed 387 fighters and 351 bombers of the Air Force of the Western Special Military District."***

These figures, wandering from book to book, categorically do not fit in with elementary school arithmetic. The three "mixed" (according to the then accepted terminology) air divisions of the first echelon of the Air Force of the Western Front (11 SAD, 9 SAD, 10 SAD) included only 172 bombers. Even if we assume that they were all destroyed on the first day (a rather rash assumption), then arithmetic requires that the number of fighters lost only in these three divisions be 482 units ( $347 + 180 + 127 - 172$ ), but certainly not 387. If at least some of the bombers of the 9th, 10th and 11th divisions survived, then the number of fighter losses should arithmetically become even higher. And taking into account the losses of fighters 43 IAD - even more ...

Apparently, it's time to ask the simplest and most important question - and who saw it, is it "the destruction of Soviet aviation as a result of a sudden attack on airfields"? Where, in fact, did the strange hypothesis come from, which for more than half a century has been offered to us as a non-negotiable axiom? What are these "common figures" based on?

The territory of the "Bialystok ledge", in which 11, 9 and 10 SAD were deployed, was taken into "pincers" by infantry and tank divisions of the Wehrmacht in the first 3-4 days of the war. Encircled and during the disorderly retreat, dozens of generals, thousands of tanks and hundreds of thousands of soldiers went missing. Is any of the participants

of this unparalleled disaster was able to compile a reliable register of aircraft destroyed at airfields by air strikes? With an exact list of damage received by these aircraft, with an indication of the time of the enemy air raid? And if such a "registry" exists, then why hasn't it been published over the past six decades? In the already mentioned, academically solid, monograph

by Kozhevnikov, after the figures for the losses of aviation on the Western Front, there is a reference ... to the popular book "Aviation and Cosmonautics of the USSR"! This is as appropriate as, for example, a reference to a Jules Verne novel in a modern monograph on submarine design. Marshal G.V. Zimin, in his work "Tactics in Combat Examples" intended for Air Force commanders, repeating the prescribed spell (**"the enemy managed to destroy up to 1200 aircraft, including 800 at airfields"**), gives a link ... to the propaganda brochure "The Military Glory of Soviet Aviation", released in 1953! And this despite the fact that at the end of Zimin's monograph there are several pages of continuous references to TsAMO ... Now let's move on from school arithmetic to tactics and operational art.

According to the canonical version, more than half (654 aircraft out of 1200) of all total losses on the first day of the war and two-thirds (528 out of 800) of all "ground" losses were lost in the three divisions of the Air Force of the Western Front. How could this be possible? Of course, only telegraph poles are even and the same, but one common reason for all Soviet aviation - a "sudden strike on airfields" - could not lead to such different results. If all this misfortune happened because Stalin, **"fearing to give Hitler a reason to attack, forbade putting the troops on alert,"** then why were the consequences of this evil (or stupid) Stalinist will distributed so unevenly? Why were losses in three divisions out of twenty-five half of the total losses? Strictly speaking, there were significantly more air divisions than 25. The entire grouping of the Soviet Air Force in the western theater of operations included 48 air divisions. By excluding the Air Force divisions of

the Leningrad District from this list, excluding a large number of new formations that are being formed, excluding the DBA divisions (which, by virtue of

their geographical location could not fall under the first blow in any way), and we come to the lowest figure - 25. Agree, Soviet (and Russian who joined them) historians demonstrate strange logic: events in 3 objects out of 25 are considered "typical", and the situation in 22 objects out of 25 it is considered a rare exception that does not even deserve a simple mention! We will go the other way. First, we will consider the course of events on the flanks of the

Soviet-German front, then in the Kiev and Baltic districts, and only after that, having familiarized ourselves with the typical picture, will we proceed to consider the circumstances of the unprecedented defeat of the first echelon of the Western Front Air Force.

## LENINGRADSKY IN

The ground troops and aviation of the Leningrad Military District (Northern Front) did not conduct active combat operations in the first three days of the war. The actions of German aviation were limited to several flights of reconnaissance aircraft in the Leningrad region (one reconnaissance aircraft was shot down on June 23 by anti-aircraft artillery, another was damaged by anti-aircraft fire and crashed when returning to the airfield). On the same day, June 23, the first victory in the air for the Air Force of the Northern Front was won: the pilot of the 158th IAP, Lieutenant A.V. Chirkov, piloting the latest Yak-1 fighter at that time, shot down a German aircraft in the area between Pskov and Ostrov. The most significant episode of the first days was the aerial mining of the Kronstadt Bay, carried out at dawn on June 22 by the Junkers Ju-88 squadron from the KGr-806 "sea" group.

The Air Force of the Baltic Fleet was somewhat more active. Already at 6 o'clock in the morning on June 22 (that is, at the very time when the first emergency meeting was taking place in distant Moscow in Stalin's office), the KBF Air Force bombed Finnish ships that landed troops on the Aland Islands (the islands belonged to Finland, but had the status of a demilitarized zone) and fortifications on Korpo Island (30 km west of the Finnish city of Turku). However, this airstrike was practically ineffectual.

The real war began in the early morning of June 25, when the aviation of the Northern Front, together with the Air Force of the Baltic and Northern Fleets

dealt a massive blow to military facilities (including airfields) in Finland. The factor of surprise, fully used by the Soviet command, was supplemented by an extremely "unsuccessful" for the defending bombers, geography. Most of Soviet reaching targets from the Gulf of Finland. The Finns could not place hundreds of observation posts of the air surveillance and warning service (VNOS) on the water, there were no locators in service with the impoverished Finnish army at all; as a result, during the first raids, the air raid siren often sounded after the bombs exploded. Without digressing for a second to a discussion of the political causes that led to the events of June 25, let us consider the course and outcome of this - as Soviet historians claimed - "the first multi-day operation of the Soviet Air Force." In the monograph repeatedly mentioned above, Major General of Aviation, Doctor of Sciences, Professor M.N. Kozhevnikov ("Command and Headquarters of the Air Force of the Soviet Army in the Great Patriotic War"), we can read the following:

Early in the morning of June 25 , 236 bombers and 224 fighters delivered the first massive strike against **19 airfields** . As a result, Soviet pilots successfully bombed aircraft stands, fuel and ammunition depots. **41 enemy planes** were destroyed at the airfields . Our aviation **had no losses**. In the next five days, several more effective strikes were delivered on the same airfields and those newly discovered by air reconnaissance. According to aerial photographic control, Soviet pilots, having attacked a total of 39 airfields, made about 1,000 sorties, destroyed and disabled **130 enemy aircraft**. The command of the Nazi troops in Finland and Northern Norway was forced to withdraw its aviation to distant rear airfields ...

**(27)**

Agree, this text largely coincides with the standard description of the first strike of the Luftwaffe on Soviet airfields. And the quantitative parameters (460 aircraft in the "first wave") are quite comparable with the actions of the 1st Luftwaffe Air Fleet in the skies of the Baltic. The difference is found only in the results. Even if we take the above figures on faith, it turns out that the Soviet Air Force spent 1000 sorties in order to destroy 130 enemy aircraft in six days (and not at all in the first six hours!) Already this arithmetic is somehow poorly combined with the legend about the inevitable "1200, of which 800 are on the ground."

The documents of the Air Force Command of the Northern Front, stored in TsAMO, and the works of modern Finnish historians paint a completely different picture. The only word of truth in Professor Kozhevnikov's work is the name of the month (June). Everything else - against the background of real facts - looks like an example of "black humor".

In fact, the operation lasted exactly two days, and already on the second day (June 26), the bomber units of the Air Force of the Northern Front carried out only a few reconnaissance flights over Finnish territory. The total number of airfields actually based on Finnish aviation, which became the target of a bomb attack, was seven. Only at one airfield (in the city of Turku) was a single aircraft of the Finnish Air Force put out of action. By a strange twist of fate, it turned out to be a captured Soviet SB bomber. All other "airfield strikes" were either completely ineffective, or led to heavy losses.

attackers.

One of the most dramatic episodes of this kind was the Soviet air raid on the Finnish Joroinen airfield. At 11:45 a.m., a large group (14 or 15, according to various sources) of SB bombers from the 72nd BAP at a relatively low altitude (1000 m, according to Finnish data) approached the airfield. The tactically competent actions of the regiment command were supplemented by an element of luck - the bombers approached the airfield at the very moment when the 2nd squadron of the fighter group

LLv-26, after a long patrol in the air with empty tanks, landed at the airfield. In parentheses, we note that it is precisely this situation - a raid on an airfield during refueling of planes returning from patrols - that is often used in Russian historiography to explain the colossal "ground" losses of the Soviet Air Force: the Germans allegedly always arrived "at the wrong time ..." the bombing of the Joroinen airfield is also completely "at the wrong time" (from the point of view of the Finns). Yes, only the reaction of the Finnish fighter pilots was completely timely and clear. Two "fiats" of the duty link immediately took to the air and attacked the enemy

many times outnumbered. As a result, three bombers were shot down directly in the area of the airfield, and the rest, randomly dropping bombs, turned back. A few minutes later, the 3rd squadron LLv-26, called by radio, intercepted the bombers of the 72nd BAP near the village of Kerisalo (12 km southeast of Yoroinen). In the ensuing air battle, the strike group 72 BAP was finally defeated. Judging by the report of the commander of the Finnish squadron, Lieutenant U. Nieminen, by the end of the battle only four "SB" survived, " **one of which was trailing a smoky plume.**" In fact, Finnish fighters shot down not 10 (as they stated), but 9 bombers of 72 BAPs. The tenth "SB" was already shot down over Soviet territory by a Soviet fighter. Among the dead was the commander of the squadron 72 BAP Captain Polyakov. The Finnish fighter group LLv-26 did not lose a single aircraft that day - neither in the air nor on the ground. In just two days of operations, the Northern Front Air Force and the Baltic Fleet Air Force irretrievably lost 24 bombers. (142) There was no relocation of Finnish aviation "to distant rear airfields" at all.

Absolutely fantastic figures ("39 **airfields**", "**130 enemy aircraft**") cannot be even remotely connected with any real events ...

In general, in June, the 41st troops of the Northern Front and its powerful aviation continued to work out point by point the already hopelessly outdated pre-war cover plan. The breakthrough of the German tank divisions to Siauliai, Kaunas and Vilnius did not have any visible



influence on the decisions and actions of the Soviet command in Leningrad. And it's hard to say - did the command of the Northern Front know about the catastrophic development of events in the zone of the neighboring front? From the standpoint of today, this question sounds wild, and yet, on June 24, on the third day of the war, the headquarters of the Northern Front issued Combat Order No. 5. Paragraph 3 of this document read: "The experience of the first days of the war showed that in the fight against the Germans a huge ***role the initiative of the command staff plays. Thanks to the initiative shown, it was possible to stop the advance of the German troops on the Western and Southwestern fronts, with the exception of one sector, where the Germans managed to***

***advance up to 20 km, thanks to the huge superiority in forces.***

(153) Let's repeat once again - this is not the text of an editorial in the district circulation and not an exercise in "black humor". This is the combat order of the front headquarters. A document marked "Sov. secret", which the commanders of all levels had to be guided in their practical actions. Consoling (or deceiving) themselves and their subordinates, the command condemned the aviation of the Northern Front to passively waiting for the Germans to break through to the Western Dvina (Daugava). The waiting ended on the evening of July 1, when large groups of 2 SAD bombers launched the first strikes on German mechanized columns. (154) Unfortunately, these columns were already in the Kraslava region (40 km east of the Daugava), and by that time only memories remained from the aviation of the North-Western Front (t

If the main forces of the Air Force of the Leningrad Military District began hostilities against the German troops with a great delay, then on the extreme northern flank of the vast district, the war in the sky began with a significant "advance". For the first time, German reconnaissance aircraft were fired upon by anti-aircraft artillery of the Main Base of the Northern Fleet (Polyarny - Murmansk) at 20:50 on June 18, 1941.

These were probably the very first artillery salvos of the war. On June 19, at 11.32, anti-aircraft batteries opened fire on the German Junkers Ju-88, which passed over the Main Base at high altitude. 240 shells were used, alas, to no avail. June 20 at 16.45 another unknown aircraft was fired upon by anti-aircraft artillery of the Northern Fleet in the sky over Severomorsk. (155) Worth

It should be noted that no traces of the notorious "Stalin's order forbidding the shooting down of German reconnaissance aircraft" are found in the documents and actual events. Massed fire was fired at the violators, and if they weren't shot down, it was by no means due to excessive peacefulness. On June 22,

German aviation units and individual aircraft bombed ships, bases and airfields of the Air Force of the Northern Fleet - without any tangible result. The first of a series of effective retaliatory strikes was struck on June 24 by the "nine" "SB" from the 72nd SAP. After the bombing of the German Hebukten airfield (near the Norwegian city of Kirkenes), a fire was observed at the airfield, and according to the fleet's radio reconnaissance, "**at 18.53, the Kirkenes radio station notified its aircraft about the damage to the airfield.**" When returning from a mission, one "SB" was shot down by German fighters. On the same day, the first victory in an air battle was won: Senior Lieutenant B. Safonov (the future best ace of the polar sky) shot down a German Junkers-88 from the KG-30 bomber group in an I-16 fighter at 19.40. In the next ten days, the commanders of the bomber (H / KG-30) and fighter (IV / JG-77) air groups of the Luftwaffe died in air battles. In the early morning of June 25, eight SBs from the 72nd SAP flew out to bomb the

Finnish Luostari airfield, to which by that time the only 1./JG 77 fighter squadron in the Arctic had been relocated. Low clouds and fog prevented the task from being completed, but the first strike was followed by following. Before the end of the day, Luostari was attacked by small groups of aircraft five more times. Both sides did not suffer aircraft losses (except for one "SB", which lost its orientation, which led to an emergency landing in a deserted tundra). The Luostari airfield was not the only object of air attacks on 25 June. Aviation of the Northern Fleet tried to bomb

the Norwegian port of Kirkenes, but, having met with heavy fog, returned to the base. The Finnish port of Liina-hamari in the Petsamo region was bombed. On the evening of June 25, the Fleet Air Force bombed the distant Norwegian airfield Banak, where German bombers were based. June 26, 1941. Air Force of the Northern Fleet

carried out single and group raids on Petsamo, Kirkenes, Luostari and Vadsø. Bombers from the 137th BAP of front-line aviation made two long-range raids deep into Finland and bombed the airfields of Rovaniemi and Kemijärvi (more than 400 km in a straight line from Murmansk). Alas, the long-range reconnaissance unit of the Luftwaffe, based in Rovaniemi, did not suffer losses in aircraft. The actions of German aviation were somewhat more effective. On June 29, during a raid on the Vaenga airfield, 6 Soviet aircraft were destroyed on the ground. In total, in June 41, the losses of Soviet aviation in the Arctic amounted to 38 aircraft, of which 8 were at airfields. The most fierce battles unfolded in July 1941 - the Germans desperately rushed to the Murmansk port and the railway connecting the Arctic to the mainland. In the late evening of July 3 (the word "evening" in this case means only time - the sun does not set beyond the horizon in those parts in July), eight Junkers, under the cover of six Messers, once again tried to attack the Soviet Vaenga airfield. In the air battle that ensued, "donkeys" and "seagulls" shot down two enemy aircraft (which is confirmed by German documents), without irretrievably losing a single aircraft - either in the air or on the ground. Running a little ahead, we note that the Germans made the largest raid on the Vaenga airfield on August 6 - 36 Luftwaffe bombers attacked the airfield in five echelons from different heights and directions. The result - one "Pe-2" was destroyed, three more aircraft were damaged. On July 7, the aviation of the Northern Fleet delivered a tangible retaliatory strike. Nine SBs from the 72nd

SAP bombed the Hebukten airfield. From a height of 3 km, 36 FAB-100s, 12 incendiary bombs and cassettes with small-caliber fragmentation bombs were dropped onto the airfield. According to the reports of the crews, 15 enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground (German documents confirm the loss of two aircraft). (133) Summing up a brief review of the actions and losses of the Air Force of the Northern Front and

the Northern Fleet, we can draw a very definite conclusion: in the northern latitudes, the magic wand called "strike on airfields" resolutely refused to work - both in Soviet and German hands. In the Arctic, the total losses of Soviet aviation (from all causes, including accidents) in July 41 amounted to 80

aircraft, of which 21 aircraft were lost at the airfields - exactly one tenth of the original strength of the group. And this is not in one day, but in a whole month of fighting.

## ODESSA IN

On the southern flank of the war, Soviet aviation in the Air Force of the Odessa District (Southern Front) and the Air Force of the Black Sea Fleet consisted of 53 squadrons (640 crews) of fighters and 37 squadrons (290 crews) of bombers. The Germans (4th Air Corps of the 4th Luftwaffe Air Fleet) had at their disposal 12 squadrons (150 crews) of fighters and 12 (100 crews) of bombers. Squadrons "Heinkel", of which combat-ready war, formations of the Romanian aviation took part in the hostilities (in total, they had 8 squadrons of fighters and 11 squadrons of bombers). If we do not take into account the performance characteristics of the aircraft of the Romanian Air Force and the level of training of the flight crew, then the presence of the Romanian aviation reduced the arithmetic superiority of the Soviet side to "only" twofold. In the early morning of June 22, 1941, an armada of various aircraft appeared in the sky over the airfields of the Odessa District (German Heinkels and Messerschmitts, English Blenheims, Italian Savoy Marchetti, French Potezes, Polish bombers PZL-37 Los "and PZL-11 fighters). The enemy attacked 6 airfields (out of a total of 107, including operational ones), on which units of three regiments of the 20th SAD (4 IAP, 55 IAP, 45 BAP) and one regiment of the 21st

SAD (67 IAP) were based. Thus, 4 out of 12 regiments that were part of the district air force were subjected to enemy strikes. The enemy did not bomb Odessa and Chisinau in the first days of the war (the Romanian dictator Antonescu, for political reasons, did not

wanted to start his "crusade for the liberation of Bessarabia" with the bombing of residential areas of densely populated cities).

Soviet pilots and anti-aircraft gunners put up a tough rebuff everywhere. Romanian aviation lost irrevocably 11 aircraft, including 9 twin-engine bombers. (156) The Germans irretrievably lost one "Messer", shot down in the area of Balta; at least three Heinkel-111s were damaged (these figures may be somewhat underestimated, as losses on June 22 could be reflected in Luftwaffe documents in the following days). In the reports of Soviet fighters, of course, significantly higher numbers are mentioned, but even a dozen combat aircraft destroyed in one day was a significant loss for the enemy (primarily for the small Romanian Air Force).

The fighters of the 67th IAP were the most active that day. The pilots of the regiment made 117 sorties (an average of 2 per serviceable aircraft - this is a very high figure for the Soviet Air Force) and announced 18 enemy aircraft shot down. Own losses amounted to 6 aircraft, of which only one can be classified as "destroyed by the enemy at the airfield" (during the takeoff run, the I-16 fell into a crater from an air bomb explosion and turned over). The 4th IAP did not lose a single aircraft on June 22, however, and the combat successes of this regiment, which adopted 60 MiGs, were very modest (one Blenheim was reliably shot down). However, this could also be due to the lack of a worthy enemy - the regiment was based in the Chisinau - Grigoriopol region, where enemy aircraft did not show much activity. There was not a single irretrievable loss in the 55th IAP, although at

least three "flashes" were damaged during an enemy raid on the Balti airfield. The heaviest losses of the day were the loss on the ground of 5 bombers (3 "SB" and 2 "Pe-2") from the 45 BAP. (156) In general, the irretrievable losses of the Air Force of the Odessa Military District amounted to a little more than one percent (!) of the initial number of combat aircraft. In total, taking into account the damaged and training machines, the losses of the district air force can be "reached" up to 25-30 units. Of course, domestic historians could not endure such a violation of the myth of the "first annihilating strike on airfields". And now, in the book of D. Khazanov of the 2006 model, the phrase appears: ***"The losses turned out to be significantly***

***larger than was indicated in the initial report (23 aircraft). According to German ... data, only the aircraft of the 4th Air Corps shot down 16 Russian aircraft and destroyed another 142 on the ground. (156)***

With an ellipsis, I replaced two remarkable words in my revealing frankness: ***"clearly exaggerated."*** There is no need to argue with this definition - the pilots' reports on the number of aircraft they destroyed on the ground were "hunting stories" in the most unbridled sense of this expression (above, in Chapter 22, the figures of the declared and real "ground" losses of the Luftwaffe were given). Why was it necessary, having the reports of the commanders of the Soviet air regiments on the number of sorties and losses (it is to them, with the indication of the numbers of archival files, that D. Khazanov refers to in his book), to drag the stories of the Munchausen from the Luftwaffe "in the line"?

The appeal to the "hunting stories" of German pilots is already a new word in the struggle for the preservation of a mossy myth. The traditional approach in this case was different: "the myth is strengthened by the myth." In hindsight, such a "legend" was developed: the command of the Odessa Military District allegedly was not afraid to violate the notorious "Stalin's ban" and, on its own initiative, put the district's aviation on alert, dispersed and disguised itself. That is why the losses from the first strike on airfields were minimal.

Alas, this version is false on the one hand, and erroneous on the other. It is false in the sense that "collective Stalin" (i.e., the top military-political leadership of the USSR) in the last days before the start of the war sent one after another directives on increasing combat readiness, on camouflaging and dispersing aviation to all districts without exception, and ALL Air Force commanders not only received these encryptions, but also reported on their implementation! The idea that orders were carried out better in the Odessa District than anywhere else is simply erroneous. ***"... Despite the***

***sufficient time reserve from the moment the alarm was announced to the enemy's raid, the units still could not escape from the blow with the least losses and inflict damage on the enemy. The enemy left with impunity, and we suffered a lot because disorganization on of criminal negligence and the loss of earth .... The dispersal of the material part was***

***unsatisfactory in all regiments.... Disguise, it can be considered, no; it's especially bad in the 55th IAP ...*** " These are lines from the order in which the commander of the 20th MAD, Major General Osipenko, summed up

the results of the first day of the war. (156) How does this damning assessment fit in with the rather optimistic picture we described above? Agrees perfectly. Everything is relative. The commander of the 20th SAD compared the actions and achievements of his subordinates not with the legend about the "destroying the first strike of the Luftwaffe" (how could he know it on the evening of June 22?), but with the requirements of the Charters and Instructions, the tasks and real capabilities of the division entrusted to him. 20 SAD is the largest air division in the Odessa District (325 aircraft as of June 1, 1941) and the best armed (122 of the latest MiG-3s in two fighter regiments). If, after a collision with such a colossus, the "flying aviation museum" of the Romanian Air Force was able, having lost a dozen aircraft, to return to its bases, then this could well be assessed with the words "the ***enemy left with impunity ...***"

Another touch in the picture of "extraordinary organization" in the Air Force of the Odessa Military District can be the Soviet Su-2 aircraft shot down on the first day of the war by Pokryshkin (yes, our best ace, three times Hero of the Soviet Union A.I. Pokryshkin began his combat career in 55 IAP, the one where "there was no disguise at all"). The plane belonged to the 211th BAP of the same 20th SAD, but the "Bolshevik conspiracy" reached the point that no one showed this bomber, new to Soviet aviation, even in the picture! After the obvious failure

that befell the German-Romanian aviation on June 22, the activity of combat operations in the air decreased markedly. The parties gathered forces, conducted aerial reconnaissance and exchanged sporadic strikes of small groups of aircraft. Incomparably more significant events took place in those days at the airfields of the Crimea.

The reader familiar with Russian memoirs and historical journalism should be familiar with The Legend of Admiral Kuznetsov and Sevastopol. Summary of the legend:

Commissar of the Navy N.G. Kuznetsov "was not afraid to violate Stalin's ban" and gave the fateful order to put the fleet on alert, as a result of which the first German air raid on Sevastopol was successfully repulsed, and with heavy losses for the aggressor. A little more detailed consideration of the factual side of the case reveals interesting details. Firstly, the directive of the People's Commissar of the Navy, sent at 01.12 on June 22, 1941 to the command of the fleets, almost verbatim repeated a similar Directive ***No. provocative actions that could cause major complications ... carefully mask the increase in combat readiness ... do not carry out any other measures without special orders ... "***)

Secondly, on that fateful night, there was no less order in the fleet, but no more than in other branches of the Armed Forces of the USSR. At the main base of the Black Sea Fleet, events unfolded as follows. At 2.15 on June 22, the air defense headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet ordered the introduction of a blackout regime in Sevastopol. For a full guarantee, the "main switch" of the city's energy supply was centrally turned off. Sevastopol plunged into the pitch darkness of the southern summer night, in which the lights of two lighthouses shone dazzlingly: Inkerman and Chersonesos. Wired communication with them was interrupted (presumably by saboteurs). The messenger from the headquarters of the fleet did not reach the Inkerman lighthouse, and the lighthouse, the visibility range of which was 24 nautical miles, continued to burn, confidently unmasking the city and port.

At 2.35 am on June 22, the RUS-1 radar station at Cape Tarkhankut detected an air target coming from the west. At 03:05 sound direction-finding stations recorded the noise of aircraft engines at a distance of 20 km from Sevastopol. The technique worked flawlessly. It was more difficult with people. Commanders of all ranks began to feverishly find out who could be responsible for making the decision to open fire. For some reason, the commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Vice Admiral Oktyabrsky, began calling Moscow, the Chief of the General Staff Zhukov, although the fleet was by no means subordinate to Zhukov. The operational duty officer at the fleet headquarters (that night he was



flagship chemist of the Black Sea Fleet captain of the 2nd rank N.T. Rybalko) received, in turn, a good instruction from Admiral Oktyabrsky: ***“Keep in mind that if there is at least one of our planes in the air, you will be shot tomorrow.”*** If you believe the memoirs of Rybalko himself, he and the chief of staff of the fleet, Rear Admiral I.D. Eliseev nevertheless decided to open fire on unknown aircraft. However, I.S. Zhilin (at that time the commander of the air defense of the fleet) in his memoirs claims that neither from the chief of staff of the fleet, nor from the chief of staff of the Air Force of the Black Sea Fleet, Colonel Kalmykov, he could get any specific instructions, and he himself, at his own peril and risk, ordered the commanders air defense units ***“consider all aircraft that appear in the Sevastopol area as enemy, illuminate them with searchlights and open fire on them.”***

The first bomber appeared over Sevastopol at 03:13 on 22 June. He was discovered and illuminated by searchlights, but at the same moment an order was received to turn off the searchlights and not open fire. Chief of Staff of the 61st Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment I.K. Semyonov explained this by an order from the air defense headquarters of the fleet, but Zhilin points to the fuzzy actions of the regiment commander himself ... Be that as it may, four (according to other sources - 5 or even 9) German Heinkel He-111 bombers from the KG-4 air group. The planes approached the target one at a time, with long time intervals (15–25 minutes) and dropped bottom magnetic mines by parachute. Anti-aircraft artillery of Sevastopol air defense used up 2150 shells. In addition, anti-aircraft artillery of the ships of the Black Sea Fleet fired at German bombers. An entry in the Combat Log and the testimonies of many participants in the events indicate that one Heinkel was shot down and fell into the sea at 4.10, however, judging by German documents, group II / KG-4 had no irretrievable losses that day. (158)

Such was the real picture of the events of June 22, 1941 in Sevastopol. In the memoirs of one of our respected naval commanders (whose last name we will delicately keep silent about) we read: ***“ At a quarter past three, the powerful beams of the searchlights cut the cloudless starry sky and swayed like pendulums, feeling the sky, over which, growing with every second, a monotonous rumble spread.***

***Finally, a terrifying armada of low-flying aircraft appeared from the sea. Their endless rows of crows (emphasized by me. - M.S.) alternately swept along the Northern Bay ... The gloomy silhouettes of still unknown bombers either flashed in the beams of searchlights, then disappeared in the emptiness of the sky ... "***

"History has given us little time." It was this phrase that Hitler was supposed to utter on the evening of June 21, 1941 (and if he had also guessed to shoot himself that very evening, without waiting for April 30, 1945, the whole world would have been much better off). The Luftwaffe, whose formations fought from Brest on the Bug to Brest on the Atlantic coast of France, from North Africa to Northern Norway, did not have "endless rows of crows" of aircraft. Even for a strike on such an important target as the Main Base of the Black Sea Fleet, the Germans could not allocate at least one squadron of bombers in full force. The Germans did not have fighters capable of covering bomb carriers on a long-range raid to the coast of Crimea in the summer of 1941 at all. It is for this simple reason that the "first devastating strike" on the ships, bases and airfields of the Black Sea Fleet did not take place. The first blow (it would be more correct to say

"mosquito bite") of the Luftwaffe in June 41 was the last. The very next day, the Germans in this direction were not up to night flights to Sevastopol.

The destruction of the Romanian oil fields in Ploiesti and the most important Black Sea port of Constanta (a significant amount of Romanian oil exported through it) was invariably present in the plans of the Soviet aviation command. The Air Force of the Black Sea Fleet was the first to start this task (as for the Air Force of the Southern Front, which included 5 bomber regiments, 192 crews, 220 aircraft, they did not make a single sortie to Ploiesti or Constanta - and this despite the fact that the distance 300-350 km to these objects made it possible to use any bombers, including the light Su-2).

The first raid on Constanta took place already on the night of June 23. Three DB-3f bombers from the 2nd MTAP and four SB bombers from the 40th BAP of the Black Sea Fleet Air Force took part in it. Several dozen high-explosive bombs were used up, up to FAB-500

inclusive. True, the bombing strike, inflicted from behind the clouds from a fairly high altitude (from 3.5 to 5 km), did not cause any significant damage in the port of Constanta; a significant part of the bomb load fell into the sea. On the morning of June 23, the first (the

only and last for the entire summer of 1941) truly massive blow was dealt to Romanian targets. 60 naval aviation bombers (33 DB-3 and 27 "SB") took part in the raid on Constanta. Among other objects, the Mamaia airfield closest to Constanta was also attacked, however, without significant damage to the Romanian aircraft. In total, during June 23, at least 88 sorties were made to bomb Constanta and Sulina (another Romanian port), from 42 to 53 tons of bombs were dropped (according to various authors), including 54 FAB-500. (156, 179) Two ammunition depots exploded in Constanta, numerous fires started. All Soviet aircraft, except for one "SB" shot down by a Romanian fighter, returned to their bases. Not to mention the huge, without exaggeration, strategic importance of Romanian oil for ensuring the deadly activity of the German military

machine, everything connected with oil (oil fields, refineries, oil product storage facilities) is the most "tidbit", the most coveted target for bomber aircraft. Oil is on fire. It burns with a bright flame, and this flame made it possible to solve the problem of targeted night bombing, almost insoluble for the technology of the early 40s. The main thing is to ignite the enemy object well and for a long time.

The Germans also understood this - but history gave them little time. And the "royal Romania", which in 1940 went over to the side of the fascist "axis", was given even less time. As a result, the ground air defense of Constanta had 18–20 anti-aircraft artillery batteries and a dozen searchlights; Air defense of the fire hazardous Ploiesti - also about 12-15 searchlights and 30 anti-aircraft batteries. (156) One battery is, as a rule, four guns firing according to data from one fire control device (POISO). Thus, about 80-120 guns looked into the sky of Ploiesti or Constanta.

Is it a lot? Ground air defense of Baku was armed with 420 medium-caliber guns, 320 small-caliber guns and anti-aircraft machine guns, 564 searchlight stations. The 2nd Air Defense Corps, which covered Leningrad, was armed with about 600 85 mm guns, 246 76 mm guns, 60 small caliber guns, 230 anti-aircraft machine guns and 483 searchlight stations. By the beginning of the first German raids, on July 22, 1941, the Moscow air defense system had 1,044 anti-aircraft guns (mostly 85 mm), 336 anti-aircraft machine guns, and 618 searchlight stations. (41) And this despite the fact that the main means of Soviet air defense was not anti-aircraft artillery at all, but fighter aircraft, numbering many hundreds of fighters in the Moscow and Leningrad region. The Luftwaffe did not have many hundreds of fighters for the

defense of the Romanian oil fields, and a single fighter group III / JG-52 was sent to Romania, which (together with the planes of the squadron headquarters) had 47 Messerschmitts. True, these were the "Messers" of the latest modification of the Bf-109 F-4. By the beginning of the war, the group was based in the Bucharest region, but after the very first Soviet air strikes on Constanta, the Germans hastily relocated two fighter squadrons to the Mamaia airfield.

On the morning of June 24, another wave of Black Sea Fleet Air Force bombers (14 DB-3 and 18 SB) was met by Messers. Despite fierce enemy attacks, Soviet pilots broke through to Constanta and dropped two hundred bombs, including 12 FAB-500s. The losses were very heavy - 10 aircraft (three DB-3s and seven "SB"), that is, every third, did not return to the Crimean airfields. The enemy also suffered losses - one fighter was shot down in the air by the onboard gunners of Soviet bombers and crashed into the sea (in the reports of the crews, 11 downed Messers were announced). Three German and one Romanian fighters were destroyed at the Mamaia airfield - this episode was the first and last successful strike on enemy airfields on the Black Sea theater in June 41st. (147, 156) The next series of raids on Constanta took place

on June 25, with much smaller forces and with even worse consequences: out of 11 bombers of 2 MTAP, five were shot down. The survivors returned to

base with hundreds of holes. Considering the tactics chosen by the command of the Fleet Air Force - a series of successive attacks by tiny groups of 2-3 aircraft on an object covered by several dozen enemy fighters, one is only surprised that six bombers still survived.

At dawn on June 26, a DB-3 unit and nine SBs flew out on another raid to Constanta. This time, a couple of "silts" did not reach the target "due to malfunctions in the materiel", and the "SB" squadron lost 4 out of 9 aircraft. (179) . True, on this day, June 26, 1941, units of long-range bomber aviation finally joined the actions of the fleet aviation. However, out of five fully equipped air regiments (there were seven in total) of the 4th DBA Corps, only one 21st DBA took part in the raid on Romanian targets, which, having 50 combat-ready aircraft, completed only 17 sorties. Even this frail force was divided into three groups that attacked Constanta, Ploiesti and the Romanian capital Bucharest. Only five DB-3s flew to Constanta, three of which were shot down by German fighters. Two dozen bombs were dropped on Bucharest from a high altitude (7 km), resulting in only panic among the civilian population and one bomber shot down while retreating from the city. In total, out of 17 DBA aircraft that day, seven were lost (for various reasons). (156) On the evening of June 26, People's Commissar of the Navy Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov gave the order to suspend the bombing raids of the Air Force of the Black Sea Fleet. Of course, the High

Command in Moscow could not agree with such passivity in solving a strategically important task, and already on June 30 an order was received to resume strikes on Romanian targets. This time, the Ploiesti oil fields were chosen as the main target.

The first raid of the Fleet Air Force bombers on Ploiesti took place on the evening of 1 July. Of the six DB-3fs that flew out, only two reached the target, the rest turned back due to the next "malfunctions in the materiel." Significantly larger forces (23 SB bombers and two DB-3f) attacked the port facilities of Sulina, Tulcha and Constanta (i.e., the Fleet Air Force command continued to solve its "departmental tasks",

wanting to be distracted by the bombing of oil fields). The 4th air corps of the DBA sent 14 aircraft to the raid on Ploiesti, of which 4, not reaching the target, returned due to "materiel failures", 5 "did not find" Ploiesti in the darkness of the night and bombed Bucharest.

On July 4, in heavy fog, 9 bombers of the 2nd MTAP bombed Constanta again, two more DB-3s were shot down by enemy fighters. After that, the People's Commissar of the Navy issued an order prohibiting the use of bombers during the day. The Fleet Air Force finally switched to safer - and practically ineffective - non-aimed bombing by small groups of aircraft at night.

This is the time to remember that the Black Sea Fleet Air Force had its own fighter aircraft (three air regiments and three separate squadrons), which were armed with more than 300 aircraft, including 19 of the latest MiG-3s. And two hundred kilometers from Constanta were the advanced airfields of the Air Force of the Southern Front, which was armed with about 600 fighter aircraft, including 189 MiGs. It would seem that every bomber in a raid on Constanta or Ploiesti could be covered by a whole squadron of fighters. It would seem that. There were no unsolvable technical

problems. "Migi" and "gulls" had a flight range of more than 600 km. The flight range of the "donkey" was less (440 km), but back in 1939, external fuel tanks were developed, tested and put into serial production, using which the flight range of the "I-16" exceeded 600 km. The tanks were made of special cardboard, which, when hit by a bullet or a fragment, did not give burrs that prevented the self-tightening of the hole in the rubber protector. The last production series of "I-16" without fail were equipped with a pair of hanging tanks. In solving technical problems, the Soviet aviation industry went so far that already in August 1941, military technology of the late 20th

century was practically implemented: a heavy carrier aircraft, without entering the enemy's active air defense zone, drops a small-sized cruise missile. The four-engine giant TB-3 was used as a carrier, and the I-16 fighter was used as a manned "cruise missile". Two "donkeys" were installed on the wings of the TB-3, then, in close proximity

from the target they undocked from the carrier, in a steep dive they attacked the target with a heavy high-explosive bomb, after which they independently returned to the base. Work on the "composite bomber" was successfully started even before the war. On August 10 and 13, 1941, three "bundles" (TB-3 + 2 "I-16") struck a strategic bridge across the Danube near Cernavod (Romania), while five direct hits of the FAB-250 in the spans of the bridge were noted - for the military aviation of the early 40s is "aerobatics" in every sense of the word.

Returning to the events of June-July 41, we are forced to state that not a single attempt was made to provide fighter cover for the bombers - up to the moment when the offensive of the Romanian and German troops did not throw the Red Army back across the Dniester, and the question of using the airfields of Bessarabia took off by itself. The reasons for such disorganization have never been discussed in Soviet historiography (strictly speaking, this question has never been asked). As a hypothesis - the simplest and most plausible - one can suggest that the organizational problem turned out to be insoluble. The Air Force of the Southern Front is one department, and the Air Force of the Fleet is a completely different one. For the Soviet, allegedly "strictly centralized", state machine, the task of organizing joint actions of fighters from one people's commissariat and bombers from another turned out to be insoluble.

If in such a situation the crews of bomber aviation had any chance to complete a combat mission and survive at the same time, then this chance was only in massing forces, in building dense battle formations of large groups of bombers that could meet the attacking Messerschmitts with a wall of machine-gun fire. In the case of raids on Romanian facilities, this task was quite solvable, since the Germans had only three squadrons of fighters there, and these forces had to be distributed between Bucharest, the Ploiesti oil fields and the Black Sea ports (Constanta, Sulina). It would seem that it is not necessary to graduate from the Academy of the General Staff in order to understand this simple arithmetic. Alas, it was at this moment, on July 4, 1941, signed by the Chief of the General Staff Zhukov, that the Directive of the Headquarters of the Civil Code (b / n) was issued with the following content:

The headquarters  
ordered: 1. Departure for bombing objects and troops with large  
groups are strictly prohibited.

2. Henceforth, sorties for bombing on one target at the same  
time produce no more than a link, in extreme cases, a squadron ...

**(5 p. 48)**

For hundreds of bomber crews, these few lines became  
death sentence. In those

days, the high command saw (and not without reason) in  
bomber aviation was the last remaining reserve at its disposal, with the <sup>his</sup>  
help of which it could at least stop the non-stop movement of Wehrmacht tank  
columns to the east. The surviving (and survived after the defeat of the first  
echelon of the Air Force, mainly parts of the DBA, deployed in the deep rear)  
bombers were sent in pairs and links to strike at bridges, crossings and  
motorized columns of German troops. Moreover, if in the latter case the tactic  
of successive strikes in small groups could still have some meaning (the  
Germans did not have enough fighters for continuous patrolling over all roads,  
and, under a happy coincidence, the bombers could avoid meeting with an air  
enemy), then with raids on obviously known oil fields covered by ground-based  
air defense and fighters, it is not possible to find a reasonable explanation for  
such a suicidal tactic.

In total, from 3 to 22 July, the bomber aviation of the Black Sea Fleet,  
during 13 raids, carried out 73 sorties to strike at Ploiesti. Taking into account  
the initial strength of the Fleet Air Force (130 bombers, including 55 long-range  
bombers), such a number of sorties could well have been achieved in one  
massive raid. With an incomparably more significant result and, most likely,  
with fewer losses of aircraft and crews. On the other hand, seven dozen aircraft  
nevertheless dropped several hundred high-explosive and incendiary bombs  
on the oil fields. It could not pass without consequences. Numerous fires broke  
out in Ploiesti,



production shops and oil storage facilities were destroyed. Particularly severe destruction was noted after the bombing of July 14–15. The Izvestia newspaper reported in those days that ***“as a result of Soviet air raids on Ploiesti, 200,000 tons of various oil products were destroyed during a week. Oil refineries, cracking plants, various equipment of oil sources, railway lines, rolling stock and vehicles adapted for transporting oil were destroyed and damaged.*** This

message (with or without quotation marks), this devastating figure (200 thousand tons) has been fluttering from book to book, from author to author for more than half a century. Let's pay tribute to the Izvestia newspaper - even in the conditions of war, it nevertheless was not too lazy to tell the understanding reader the source of this information: "The ***New York Times correspondent, referring to information from foreign military sources*** .

## Chapter

### 25 HOW IT WAS - 2

#### Kyiv OVO

Ivan Andreevich Krylov has a wonderful fable. Pro a young impudent raven who decided to hunt.

Of the many lambs, rams and sheep, I  
looked out, compared and finally chose the  
Sheep, but which one? Prezhirny, pre-mature,  
Who was a good b and a wolf in the rise.

That hunt ended badly for the raven - having swooped down on the target, he hit, got tangled in the ram's wool, ***"and ended the feat by got caught up."***

According to sound reasoning, the black crows of the Luftwaffe should have ended their offensive in Ukraine with this. The 5th Aviation Corps, operating jointly with the Army Group "South" over Ukraine, had 8 bomber and 3 (three) fighter groups, the only JG-3 squadron in the corps. In total (taking into account temporarily out-of-service aircraft) they were armed with 247 "horizontal" bombers (163 "Ju-88" and 84 "Not-111") and 109 fighters by the beginning of hostilities. Arithmetically speaking, the Germans could not single out at least a couple of bombers for a simultaneous strike on each of the 150 airfields of the Kyiv OVO. There was not a single Ju-87 dive bomber (this flying symbol of the Blitzkrieg, beloved by all documentary filmmakers), not a single Me-110 fighter-bomber in the sky over the Kiev OVO (Southwestern Front). From this, in particular, it follows that the capabilities of the 5th Luftwaffe Air Corps for aimed bombing at point targets (which are aircraft camouflaged at the edge of the airfield) were close to zero.

German aviation was opposed by the most powerful grouping of the Soviet Air Force - the aviation of the Kyiv OVO (South-Western Front). Here, in the strip from Lvov to Krakow and Katowice, it was planned to deliver the main blow of the Red Army; huge aviation forces were also concentrated here: 20 fighter and 13 bomber regiments as part of the Front Air Force, and even 6 bomber regiments as part of the 4th DBA air corps deployed in Ukraine (headquarters in Zaporozhye). The 2nd air corps of the DBA (headquarters in Kursk) could also be involved in the operation; these are 6 more air regiments, 250 DB-3 / DB-3f bombers. In terms of the number of combat-

ready crews (not counting the 2nd DBA Corps), the Soviet Air Force had a sixfold superiority in this theater of operations (see Chapter 20). In terms of the number of fighter pilots, the superiority was ninefold. Even in terms of the number of "new types" fighters (185 MiG-3s and 62 Yak-1s, including temporarily out of order), the Kiev OVO Air Force had a two-fold numerical superiority over the enemy - that was a situation unique for the entire Soviet-German front. Let us recall once again that these figures were obtained on the basis of a clearly underestimated number of Soviet aviation: many "forming regiments" were not taken into account, all attack air regiments without exception were not taken into account (they were armed with obsolete I-15bis biplanes at the beginning of the war), bomber air regiments were not taken into account, equipped with obsolete four-engine giants TB-3.

Mathematical modeling of combat operations is an extremely difficult job; nevertheless, let us try in the most simplified form to "calculate" the struggle for air superiority in the sky of Ukraine in June 1941 (as it will become clear from what follows, we will no longer have to count

July). Suppose that 100 German fighter pilots fly two sorties every day and only 15 sorties are spent on one downed Soviet fighter (a very high, record figure). Further, suppose that 900 "Stalin's falcons" fight half as intensively (one sortie per day) and four times less effectively - spend 60 sorties per downed enemy fighter (an extremely low figure). For simplicity, we will assume that the fighters are fighting each other, not

being distracted by a much more important tactical fight against enemy bombers.

Under these initial conditions (that is, practically "playing giveaway" - for why on earth do Soviet pilots, protecting their native sky, fly half as often as Goering's kites?), we get the following result: by the end of the seventh day, German fighters completely exterminated; the Soviet grouping lost 49 aircraft, i.e., less than 6% of its original strength. Anyone who is not too lazy to work for five minutes with a calculator will see what is the secret of such a swift "defeat of the Luftwaffe": despite the loss of 13 to 3 aircraft per day, a huge group of Soviet fighters almost does not decrease and with constant constancy shoots down 15-14 enemy aircraft per day. In a week, the enemy ends ... At dawn on June 22, 1941, breaking all the plans and calculations of the top military-political leadership of the USSR, the

Germans launched an invasion. In the very first days of the war, small enemy aircraft achieved air superiority. No, it was not at all about a "destructive strike on peacefully sleeping airfields"; nothing like that - the main reason for the low efficiency of the actions of the formally huge Air Force of the Southwestern Front was the indiscipline and inaction of the command. Quite often, they acquired the features of criminal dishonesty and cowardly inaction.

In any description of any operations on any sector of the front of the war of 1941, we necessarily find the standard phrase: "the enemy struck at the junction of the adjacent flanks of the NNth divisions (corps, armies, fronts)". By the way, this is how the events of the first days of the war in Western Ukraine developed: the Germans delivered the main blow at the junction of the 5th and 6th armies of the Southwestern Front. It's time to ask the question: "Why exactly in the joint? Why is this tactic so beneficial to the attacker? After all, on the adjacent flanks of two divisions (corps, armies, fronts) can you run into a counterattack from two sides at once, with a redoubled force? Unfortunately, the Germans knew who they were dealing with. The standard Soviet commander thought first of all about what he would write in the evening operational report "upstairs" and was primarily concerned about the stability of the defense of his sector. IN

in peacetime, this was called the “narrow departmental approach”, “localism”. The party and the government fought tirelessly against him - they fought until the dissolution of the CPSU and the collapse of the USSR. In a situation of war, this unwillingness to help a neighbor on the front, moreover, the desire in a crisis to shift responsibility to a neighbor, became the cause of a long series of defeats. On the

Southwestern Front in June 1941, when the 5th Army rolled east under the blow of the German tank "wedge", the 12th Army of the front was practically inactive, the 26th fought local battles in its lane, and the commander of the 6th The most powerful 4th mechanized corps was “hiccupped” by the 1st Army and “did not give it up” to participate in a frontal counterattack in the Brody-Dubno region. It all ended in early August 1941 with the encirclement of the remnants of the 6th and 12th armies in the Uman region and the capture of 100 thousand people, including two army commanders. A lot has been written about this today, in particular, by me. (127) The

same thing happened in the air. Compiled in August 1941 at the headquarters of the Air Force of the Southwestern Front, the “Summary of destroyed enemy aircraft”, (161), if summarized in a single table, is extremely eloquent

**Table 22**

	22 - 30.06	1 - 6.07	7-12.07	Всего
14 ИАД (17, 46, 89 ИАП), Луцк	29	10	1	40
15 САД (23, 28, 164 ИАП), Львов	65	8	0	73
16 САД (87, 92 ИАП), Тернополь	20	2	2	24
63 САД (20, 91, 165 ИАП), Самбор	0	0	41	41
ВВС 12-й армии (Станислав)	0	0	74	74
36 ИАД (2, 43, 254, 255 ИАП), Киев	0	0	17	17
ИТОГО:	114	20	135	269

Note: the areas of pre-war deployment of headquarters are indicated air divisions.

In the first two weeks of the war, some are inactive (the fighter regiments of the left, southern flank of the front), then others. True, these "others" by that time had already been practically defeated:

**Table 23**

	22.06	11.07
14-я ИАД (17-й, 46-й, 89-й ИАП)	171	26
15-я САД (23-й, 28-й, 164-й ИАП)	170 / 98	20 / 11
16-я САД (87-й, 92-й ИАП)	132 / 4	38 / 2

Note: the first digit is for the total number of aircraft, the second is for "new types"; the total number is given, including aircraft temporarily out of service.

However, there is a certain difference between events on the ground and in the air. To justify the inactivity of the southern flank of the front at the moment when the enemy was destroying the northern flank, one can come up with many "objective" reasons, causes and justifications. Aviation is the most mobile branch of the military. From Sambir and Stanislav (now Ivano-Frankivsk) to the Brody-Dubno region, no more than 150–200 km in a straight line (and it is not necessary to fly along a curve in the air). Accordingly, the fighters of the 63rd SAD and the 64th IAD could cover the mechanized corps, which launched a counterattack in the Brody-Berestechko zone, without even changing their base airfields. However, the reports of the commanders of Soviet tank divisions regularly repeat the same phrase: "Our aviation is inactive ...". And these reports were not far from truth.

The Air Force of the Southwestern Front completed 10,000 sorties by July 10. (27) Taking into account the initial number (about 2 thousand combat aircraft and more than 1.5 thousand flight crews), this corresponds to one sortie in 3 days, although in the first, decisive days of the battle, three sorties per day should be expected ... 4th the DBA air corps (six air regiments, 345 DB-3 / DB-3f bombers) was inactive for three days (June 22, 23, 24). Considering that there were 92 crews in the corps, trained for night flights, we can say "it was inactive for three days and three nights." The 4th Corps of the DBA did not obey the command of the front and waited for instructions from Moscow. When the instructions were received, on June 26, five air regiments of the corps carried out 60 sorties to strike at the German tank columns advancing on Rovno-Ostrog. 60 sorties for five regiments -

this is the transformation of a regiment into a squadron. Moreover, a squadron that is not fighting too actively - only one sortie a day. The 22nd DBAD, which was part of the 4th Air Corps (158 serviceable bombers and 133 flight crews), completed only 581 sorties by the end of July, i.e., on average, one crew flew once every nine days. (167, p. 34) This is how the real numerical superiority of Soviet aviation turned into a shaky mirage.

A valuable source of information about events in the sky over Ukraine is the report of the Commander of the Air Force of the Southwestern Front, Lieutenant General F.A. Astakhov, signed on August 21, 1941 (148) General Astakhov took command of the Air Force of the Yu-3 Front only on June 26, after the arrest of Ptukhin. He was not responsible for the failures and losses of the first days of the war (on June 22, Astakhov still commanded the educational institutions of the Red Army Air Force), so his report frankly paints an unsightly picture of events. Without further ado, let's quote some fragments from a multi-page document:

... In the period from 22.6 to 1.7.41, there were a lot of shortcomings in the organization of the combat work of the flight units of the Air Force of the front, of which the most serious are:

a) The first days of the war (June 22, 23, 24) the Front Air Force was not active enough, had few repeated sorties, some bomber aviation regiments (226th, 227th and others) were not involved in combat work at all, raids on enemy airfields very little has been done.

b) There was no interaction between flight units and ground forces and interaction between bombers and fighters, as a result of which ground units did not receive timely support from the Air Force at crucial moments of their combat work, and bombers flying on combat missions without fighter cover suffered heavy losses ...

The report concludes with a summary of the number of sorties and ammunition expended between June 22 and August 10, 1941. **"Aerial bombs dropped - 2842 tons."** We will not

even to discuss the question of where (on the enemy, in an open field, on the heads of our troops) these bombs were dropped, what was the accuracy and effectiveness of these bombings. Let's look at a much simpler question: is 2842 tons of bombs a lot or a little? In total, during the indicated period, the Front's aviation carried out 36,780 sorties. The report does not give a "breakdown" of this number between fighters and bombers, but given that the initial number of fighters was twice the number of bomber crews, and fighters fly more often, it can be assumed that at least one fifth of the total number of sorties fell on bombers. In this case, in one sortie, the bomber lifted on average about 390 kg of bomb load. What kind of bombers are these? The most massive "SB" had a normal bomb load of one ton, the maximum - one and a half tons. "DB-3" could lift up to 2.5 tons of bombs. And in a situation where almost all aviation was operating on targets on the battlefield or in the near operational rear of the enemy, that is, at minimum flight ranges, it was the maximum bomb load that should have been used ...

And yet, the results of a collision between a brand new Mercedes and an old collective farm UAZ will be equally noticeable for each of these cars. No matter how badly the "combat work of the flight units" of the Air Force of the Southwestern Front was organized, the simple and inexorable laws of numerical superiority continued to operate in June 1941. Already on the first day of the war, the 5th Air Corps of the 4th Air Force of the Luftwaffe irretrievably lost 2 fighters and 30 bombers. Another headquarters Me-110 was shot down near Lvov. In total, 33 German aircraft were shot down in the skies over Western Ukraine. The KG-51 bomber squadron alone lost irretrievably 14 Junkers Ju-88s of the latest modification. Noteworthy is the ratio of the losses of German fighters and bombers - one to fifteen. In other words, the JG-3 fighters completely failed their main task. We emphasize once again that we are talking about the irretrievable losses of combat aircraft - taking into account the damaged aircraft, the total daily losses reach 58 aircraft (and this number does not include losses associated with take-off accidents, mid-air collisions, loss



orientation, does not include the loss of tactical reconnaissance aircraft, sanitary, communications,

etc.). For the frail forces of the 5th Air Corps of the Luftwaffe, 30 shot down aircraft per day meant the prospect of losing all combat vehicles in less than two weeks. However, this did not happen. It was June 22 ("a surprise attack, peacefully sleeping airfields, unpreparedness for war") that turned out to be the day of the most productive actions of the Air Force of the Southwestern Front! In the future, the level of daily losses of the Luftwaffe began to decline sharply

and steadily (see Appendix 6). From June 23 to June 30 inclusive, the 5th Air Corps lost 40 combat aircraft irretrievably (that is, an average of five per day - a sixfold decrease in the level of losses compared with the first day of the war). In July of the 41st, it is quite difficult to separate the planes of the 5th Air Corps, shot down in the Southwestern Front, and the planes of the 4th Air Corps, shot down in the South Front, because in the second half of July the offensive of the ground forces of the Wehrmacht and the Romanian army mixed the original picture of the distribution of forces of the parties. In any case, the cumulative losses of the entire 4th Luftwaffe Air Fleet in July 1941 amounted to less than 4 aircraft per day. As for the losses of formations of the 5th Air Corps (KG-51, KG-54, KG-55, JG-3), they amounted to only 73 aircraft per month (i.e., 2.4 per day). In other words, the level of average daily losses decreased by a further two times.

It's time to remember about the "first devastating strike on airfields." Perhaps it was precisely as a result of this strike that the number of fighters on the Southwestern Front dropped sharply, and therefore the enemy's losses after June 22 sharply declined? We open once again the report of the commander of the Air Force of the Southwestern Front, we read: **"... on 22.06 the first enemy raids on our airfields of the front line did not inflict significant losses on our flying units, but ... with repeated strikes during 22.6.41 and in the next two days, the enemy inflicted our flying units suffered significant losses, destroying and damaging** (hereinafter, it is highlighted by me. - **M.S.**) **at our airfields on June 22, 23 and 24, 1941, 237 aircraft ... "**

This figure - 237 aircraft - wandered through the pages of the books of our "historians" for many years, but at the same time none of them admitted that these were losses in the first three days, and not at all from one first German raid, and we are not talking about only about "destroyed", but also about "damaged" machines. Damage is different. Many - especially if the plane received them on the ground and not in the air - can be fixed. What does "many" mean? All in the same report by Astakhov it is indicated that in three weeks (from June 22 to July 13) 990 aircraft were restored, which, we note, is 4 times more than the total number of aircraft damaged and destroyed on June 22 at airfields. Be that as it may, even 237 aircraft is only 12% of the total number of combat aircraft of the district air force. If at least half of them have been restored, then irretrievable losses are completely reduced to barely noticeable 5-7%. Can this really be called "complete destruction"? And in any case, the "surprise attack", the notorious "Stalin's order forbidding opening fire on enemy aircraft" and other propaganda clichés of the Khrushchev era had nothing to do with these losses. On the 23rd, even more so - on June 24, the reindeer herders of Chukotka already knew about the outbreak of war ... A glass with 100 ml of liquid can be called "half

empty" or "half full". Both will be completely true. Less than 10% of the initial number of aircraft irretrievably lost on airfields is very small. When compared with the later legend about the "first annihilating blow of the Luftwaffe." But General Astakhov (just like the commander of the 20th SAD, General Osipenko, whose order we mentioned in the previous chapter) did not know anything about this "destructive blow", he had no idea about his "inevitability" (and he could hardly think of the possibility of such an absurd story appearing in the future). Therefore, without naming his predecessor as commander of the Air Force of the Kiev Regional Military District, he gives an extremely unflattering assessment of the actions of the command and personnel of the aviation units of the district: "... before the start of the war, the **issues of masking airfields and the aircraft located on them were not resolved; air defense of airfields was organized unsatisfactorily, which is explained not only by the lack of necessary camouflage equipment,**

***air defense systems, but also by the fact that commanders of all levels did not pay due attention to this issue ... the lack of the necessary organization and clarity in the actions of the flight and ground units of the air force of the front when repelling enemy air raids on our airfields ... the air surveillance, warning and communications service in the border zone of the Kiev OVO worked unsatisfactorily. On June 22, 1941, the flight units located at the airfields of the front line did not receive messages about flights of the state border by enemy aircraft in a timely manner ... "***

Now let's "tweak the sharpness" and take a look at what ***the "lack of necessary organization and clarity in actions"*** looked like from a close distance.

In many publications (50, 58, 169) there is a story about a German air raid in the person of a single bomber on the airfield of the 87th IAP (16th SAD, Buchach airfield near Ternopil). The cunning of the enemy led to significant losses:

... From June 21 to 22, the most experienced pilots of the regiment practiced night flights for up to 3 hours. Did not have time to fall asleep - alarm! Around 4 am, the first air battles began. At 4:50 a.m., a Ju-88 aircraft appeared from the side of the headquarters of the 16th SAD at an altitude of several tens of meters in the rays of the rising sun. Having dropped a series of bombs, the Junkers destroyed seven I-16s ...

In a special message of the 3rd Directorate (military counterintelligence) NPO No. 36137 dated July 1, 1941, this story is described much more realistically : ***On June 22, together with other commanders, they drank in a restaurant in the city of Buchach. After receiving a telegram from the headquarters of the 16th air division about a combat alert*** (emphasis mine. - ***M.S.***), ***the command of the regiment, being in a drunken state, was unable to quickly put the regiment in order. June 22 at 5.50 a German bomber appeared over the airfield, which was mistaken for an aircraft***

**division commander. In view of this, he freely began shelling the airfield from a height of 10-15 meters and disabled 9 aircraft ...** " Why does the

report of the " special officers "become more reliable? If only because from a height of several tens of meters, the German plane does not drop bombs, but fires from onboard machine guns. In any case, seven (or even nine) "donkeys" damaged at the Buchach airfield were not even part of the equipment of the 87th IAP, but stood at the airfield awaiting transfer to another unit (in the number of aircraft of the Kiev OVO Air Force indicated in this book and the 16th SAD in particular, these aircraft are not included). Even after a super-successful (for the Germans) raid on the airfield, 60 I-16s and 4 MiG-3s remained in the 87th IAP.

The consequences of an enemy strike for the 17th IAP (14th SAD) became much more severe. I must immediately warn you - the story of the defeat of the 17th IAP is more unique than typical. In the first edition of this book, I quite frankly admitted that **"in many years of work, I could find only one account of one eyewitness about one such event."** Of course, this is a very frivolous discussion. I knew that such confessions would provoke the fire of legitimate criticism. I couldn't find it - don't complain, but look further. However, a year passed, the second, the third, until, finally, a multi-page opus called "Anti Solonin-1" appeared. (162) Mr. Isaev was indignant for a long time and painfully (**"behind all this lies simple laziness and unwillingness to deal with the real state of things ... the total closeness of the archives is most beneficial for dreamers and "whistleblowers", because it allows you to fantasize with complete impunity, without bothering yourself with an evidence base ... "**). Having scolded to his heart's content, Mr. Isaev began a detailed story about ... yes, yes, everything about the same 17th IAP, and again with quoting the memoirs of F.F. Archipenko. This funny incident only strengthened my opinion about the exceptional nature of the events that took place in the first hours of the war at the peacefully sleeping (in this case, almost without quotes) airfield of the 17th Fighter

air regiment.

This regiment was the "old", personnel regiment of the Air Force of the Kyiv District. 57 pilots, 53 aircraft (50 I-153s and 3 I-16s). On the eve of the war, it was stationed at the Velitsk airfield near the city of Kovel -

the most important railway junction of the Ukrainian Polissya. The level of flight training of the personnel was exceptionally high: **"... Our regiment was 4 squadrons, armed with" seagulls "I-153". The regiment was commanded by Major Dervyanov, holder of the Order of the Red Banner, his deputy was Major Semenov, who was awarded the Order of Lenin. Our regiment was so well trained that it took off even at night in formation as part of a squadron** (hereinafter, it is emphasized by me. - **M.S.**). **I myself later flew at night, but I had never seen anything like this in my life, so that the squadron took off in formation at night, as during the day ... There were guys who were considered the best pilots in the entire Kiev OBO ... Before the war, we flew a lot, doing all kinds of combat training ... "**

So writes in his memoirs the Hero of the Soviet Union, an outstanding fighter pilot (467 sorties, 30 personally shot down enemy aircraft) F.F. Archipenko. (59) Further - even more interesting. No surprise is visible: **"... The day before the war, an encryption came, allowing to shoot down German reconnaissance aircraft. In addition, 10-12 days before the war, we were ordered to disperse the planes along the border of the airfield. And then they stood flat. We also dug caponiers and crevices for sheltering personnel ... "** And now - the harsh hour of the war has come:

... I had to be on duty at the airfield from 21 to 22 June 1941. At that time, one I-153

"Seagull" aircraft with a pilot was allocated for duty, and on that sadly memorable night, Senior Lieutenant Ibragimov, my flight commander, was on duty. On June 22, at 04:25, everything around shuddered from explosions and **a group of German bombers up to 60 aircraft** dealt a crushing blow to the airfield. Before they had time to recover from the first blow, a second raid was made on the airfield. We could not resist the bomber attacks: **the flight crew was in Kovel with their relatives**, and there was no anti-aircraft artillery near the airfield.

**Gradually, flight and technical personnel began to arrive at the airfield**, individual sorties of our pilots began. Until noon, our airfield was subjected to massive bombardment four times. In fact, in this difficult situation, **there was no leadership at the airfield**. I, the operational duty officer at the airfield, junior lieutenant Fedor Arkhipenko, clumsily tried to organize rare sorties and evacuate wrecked vehicles. The connection was broken, there were no instructions and orders, only the internal telephone lines laid to the parking lots of the air squadron survived by some miracle.

**At about 1 pm**, a participant in air battles in Spain, deputy commander of the 14th IAD, Major General of Aviation, Hero of the Soviet Union Ivan Alekseevich Lakeev, flew to the airfield. Arriving at the command post, the general took command into his own hands... There was no one at the command post, **except for the general, me and two soldiers - signalmen ...** **At about 14:00**, when **the commander of the 17th IAP arrived** there, he let me go from the command post. I hurried to my plane, it turned out to be intact ...

Probably, this text can (and should!) be used in classes at military schools: "Name all the points and paragraphs of the Charters and Instructions that were violated in the 17th IAP." We are not at the school, so we will not bore the reader with a long enumeration. And without comment, it is clear that an indescribable mess took place. After the whole series of orders of the last pre-war days, the flight crew of the fighter aviation regiment deployed in the border zone **"was in Kovel with their relatives"**, and the regiment commander appeared at the location of the unit entrusted to him only 10 hours after the start of hostilities (even riding a donkey could drive 20 km from Kovel to the airfield faster) ... The phrase about "relatives in Kovel", who had the entire flight crew of the regiment at their side, is not as simple (and not as reliable!) As it seems. With rare exceptions, the wives (and even more so, children) of the Red Army commanders were not natives of Western

"attached" lands. They arrived there with their military husbands and, at least theoretically, could return to the east, where they left their parents, brothers, sisters. This is theory. Now let's turn to practice. On December 22, 1940, the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR issued Order No. 0362, according to which ***"pilots, navigators and aircraft technicians, regardless of their military ranks, who have been in the Red Army for less than 4 years" were transferred to the barracks position.*** Pilots, navigators and aircraft technicians, transferred to the barracks, had to spend the night at the location of the military unit. Others are called "AWOL" in peacetime, and desertion in wartime. Paragraph 7 of order No. 0362 read: ***"Families of the flight and technical personnel transferred to the barracks should be removed from the territory of military camps by February 1, 1941. Send the evicted families to their homeland or relocate to honest city and town housing funds outside the location of the air unit ... "*** (163, p. 202)

It is noteworthy that in the preamble of the order it was said: ***"... In the current international situation, fraught with all sorts of surprises, the transition from a peaceful situation to a military one is only one step. Our aviation, which will be the first to take up battle with the enemy, must therefore be in a state of constant mobilization readiness ... Nowhere in the world does such an order exist for pilots to live in apartments with their families and for aviation units to be semi-civilian villages. To tolerate such a situation further means to jeopardize the combat education of our pilots, the cause of strengthening our aviation, the defense of our country ... "*** Golden

words. But if already in December 1940 the situation was assessed as "fraught with all sorts of surprises" and therefore, even in distant Siberia or Kazakhstan, pilots were transferred from family shelter to barracks, then what prevented similar measures from being taken in the fighter regiment of the first echelon of the Kiev OVO Air Force? At least after it was in this district (and not far from Kovel) that a German corporal swam across the border river Bug, in a hurry to warn the "homeland of the proletarians of the whole world" that in the Wehrmacht units the order to go on the offensive was read to the personnel on the morning of June 22 ? Yes, for the remaining hours after that

it was impossible to carry out (i.e., start and finish) a general mobilization, it was impossible to re-equip the regiment from "gulls" to "migi" - but what prevented the flight crew from being assembled at the airfield?

On the second day of the war, no one spent the night in Kovel with relatives. Which, however, did not prevent the Germans from finishing off the remnants of the regiment without much effort: ***"In the early morning of June 23, we were at the airfield. There were 25-30 serviceable aircraft*** (far from every Luftwaffe air group had such a number of serviceable aircraft on the morning of June 23. - *M.S.*) ... ***In general, the second day of the war passed quietly for the regiment, the Germans did not touch the airfield*** (hereinafter it is highlighted by me. - *M.S.*), ***only scouts flew over it. But on the morning of the third day, a dozen Me-109 fighters flew in. They stood in two circles: six planes with the right bank and six planes with the left bank and stormed, as at a training ground. The shelling was accurate, confident, as if on targets. As a result, 10 serviceable I-153s and one MiG-1 remained at the airfield, all the other machines, about 150 in number, were damaged ... "***

Let's summarize the first results of what we have read. Firstly, even in an atmosphere of complete, criminal slovenliness, after several hours of continuous bombing of a deserted airfield, 25–30 combat-ready aircraft remained in the 17th IAP (strange arithmetic with "150 damaged aircraft" is explained by the fact that, as Archipenko writes, at the airfield ***"About 70 I-15 aircraft of an outdated design were idle, to be transferred to aviation schools"***). Many of those ***"damaged by fragments"*** could be restored and were actually restored. Specifically, in the report of the commander of the Air Force Yu-3 f. it is indicated that, in general, 70 I-153 aircraft were restored in the 14th SAD (out of 78 available at the start of hostilities!). Secondly, the regiment suffered the main losses not in the first hours, but on the

third day of the war. The reasons why the command and personnel of the regiment (which was armed with about three dozen serviceable fighters) without the slightest resistance allowed the squadron of "Messers" to shoot combat aircraft, "like at a training ground", F.F. Archipenko does not name. It's a pity. There are other questions as well. It is not clear why the duty link provided for by the charters (i.e., four fighters) turned into a border



airfield into a single plane. The number of enemy bombers allegedly taking part in the first raid also raises serious doubts. Not a single bomber group of the 5th Luftwaffe Air Corps had even half of the declared number (**“a group of German bombers up to 60 aircraft”**) of serviceable aircraft. In fact, on June 22, strikes were delivered by forces of one or two links, at most - one squadron (staffel). It is interesting to note that, according to Captain F.S. Demin (commander of the 374th separate anti-aircraft artillery battalion deployed in the Kovel region), the airfield was indeed bombed at 4 am on June 22. Only not 60, but 7 German aircraft.

Now from the line of memories we turn to harsh prose documents.

According to the "Summary of Destroyed Enemy Aircraft", the regiment, half-destroyed, and armed with outdated low-speed I-153 biplanes, inflicted quite tangible losses on the enemy: on the first day of the war, the pilots of the 17th IAP shot down 4 enemy aircraft, then another 5 during the period from 23 to 30 June. The total is nine. Few? How to say - if each of the 20 fighter regiments of the Air Force of the Southwestern Front in June 41st shot down 9 German aircraft, then less than half of the 5th Luftwaffe air corps would remain ... Of course, the declared figures are many times more than the real ones, but even with Given this clarification, it is not necessary to speak of a complete inactivity of the regiment.

Further, the losses of the aircraft of the 17th IAP reflected in the documents coincide with amazing accuracy with the memoirs of Archipenko. In the above article, A. Isaev, with reference to reports on the combat and strength of units of the 14th IAD (TsAMO RF, f.229, op. 181, d.33, l.25) - indicates that by the end of the day June, the number of combat-ready aircraft in the 17th IAP decreased by 18 units, i.e. from 47 to 29. We emphasize once again that we are not talking about irretrievable losses at all, but about reducing the number of combat-ready aircraft - which is not at all the same in aviation the same (an aircraft that has burned out any of the many signal lights on the dashboard is considered faulty). Comparable losses were suffered by the 46th IAP from the 14th SAD, where the number of combat-ready aircraft was reduced by 16 units (out of 46). But this regiment, based at the Granovka airfield near Dubno, conducted a

air battles, and, judging by German documents, many German bombers shot down on June 22 crashed to the ground in this area. The third (and best-equipped) fighter regiment of the division, the 89th IAP, lost 7 aircraft out of 66 in a day. The losses are serious, but they can hardly be described with the word "rout".

Nevertheless, by July 3, only memories remained of the 14th Air Division. Two regiments (17th IAP and 46th IAP) were actually disbanded - the pilots "departed to receive new materiel"; the surviving aircraft and people of the division were consolidated into two regiments (the 89th IAP and the emerging 253rd IAP), the total number of aircraft was reduced to 44, of which only 16 were combat-ready (7 "donkeys" and 9 "gulls"). (162) Recall that by the beginning of hostilities, the division was armed with about 170 aircraft (not counting the large number of obsolete I-15bis and 9 newest MiGs, whose participation in hostilities did not leave any traces). Where did this great number of combat aircraft go? What was the specific reason for the loss? An extremely controversial answer to this question is presented in the following Table 24.

**Table 24**

	22 – 24.06	25 - 27.06	Сумма	22.06 – 3.07
Сбиты в воздухе, не вернулись с боевого задания	12	7	19	28
Уничтожены на аэродромах противником	53	29	82	75
Оставлены на аэродромах, уничтожены при отходе	47	9	56	12
Разбиты в катастрофах и авариях	-	10	10	12
ВСЕГО:	112	55	167	127

Note: the line "shot down in the air" includes those shot down in air battles and those shot down by anti-aircraft guns.

The "Amount" column shows the arithmetic sum of losses from June 22 to June 27 inclusive (the sum of the numbers in the first two columns). By sound logic, the numbers in the fourth column (cumulative losses from June 22 to July 3) should be greater than the losses from June 22 to 27. At least - no less: they could not "resurrect" the planes left at the airfields, deep behind enemy lines (by July 3

The southwestern front rolled back 200-250 km east of the border, and German fighters were based on the airfields of the 14th SAD already on June 26!). This obvious rule is observed only in the lines reflecting "normal" losses: losses from enemy impact, missing ("did not return from a combat mission") and aircraft destroyed in accidents. In the case of "airfield losses", complete confusion reigns: 56 aircraft left (abandoned) at airfields in the period from June 22 to 27, by July 3 "turn into" 12. The number of aircraft destroyed on the ground is also decreasing. the enemy, however, not so sharply (from 82 to 75). Even if we take the smaller numbers (i.e., the last column of the table) as the true truth, then in this case a very unsightly fact is revealed: losses on the ground account for 69% of the total number of irretrievable losses. Comparing the total number of aircraft irretrievably lost at airfields (87 units) with the above losses on the first day of the war (13 aircraft, not only on the ground, but also in the air), we finally come to some

final conclusion. A very strange conclusion: the planes of the 14th Air Division were mostly lost on the ground, but the events of June 22 ("the first annihilating strike on peacefully sleeping airfields") have almost nothing to do with this. And this, mind you, in the same division, where on the morning of June 22, the criminal negligence of the command and the inaction of the personnel went beyond all limits.

Concluding the review of the strange events that led to the defeat of the 14th SAD, we will present two more fragments of the memoirs of the participants in the war. In the memoirs of General Krasovsky (with the outbreak of war he became commander of the Air Force of the North Caucasian Military District), we find a description of a meeting with the commander of the 14th SAD:

... In July, the 14th Air Division arrived from Western Ukraine ...  
There was a knock on the door of my office, and a pilot appeared before me without military distinctions, in a white silk balaclava, wearing glasses. He kept himself loose. - What kind of army is this? I asked.

- Comrade General, commander of the 14th Fighter division Colonel Zykanov. - Try to put on the proper uniform. Zykanov left. I asked the head of the political department: - Do you have all the pilots in this form? - No, what are you! We have very good people. ... The next day, Colonel Zykanov again arrived at the district air force headquarters. Somewhere he got a cap, a tunic not for his height, a belt. - Now it is clear that you are the commander of the Red Army. And we said hello. - May I call Moscow? Zykanov asked. - Call. In the course of the conversation, I realized that he was reporting to the member of the Military Council of the Air Force P.S. Stepanov about the plight of his division. After a minute or two, Zykanov handed me the phone. "Krasovsky," I heard, "send Zykanov to Moscow tomorrow. Looks like we'll have to bring him in.

responsibility...

Fighter pilot, participant in the war in the skies of China, D.P. Panov met the war in the 43rd IAP of the 36th Air Division, which covered Kyiv. It's far from Kiev to Kovel, however, in Panov's memoirs, the deputy commander of the 14th SAD, Major General Lakeev, suddenly appears (although Panov mistakenly calls him the division commander - the mistake is quite understandable, given that in the 14th SAD the deputy commander was a general, and the commander - Colonel): ***"... I remember a hot day in July 1941. I am sitting in the cockpit of the I-153 Seagull at the airfield south of Brovary, where the poultry plant is now, before departure ... Major General without a position, Spanish Hero of the Soviet Union Lakeev, the Germans came up to the board of my plane, whose division, where he was commander, burned on the ground on the very first day of the war (a big and, alas, traditional exaggeration. - M.S.), and now he was hanging around our airfield idle. Fly Lakeev was a coward and was engaged in what inspired the flight crew. He decided to inspire me too: "Come on, come on,***

***commissar, give them pepper." I really wanted to send the hero praised in the press, poems and songs away, but the high commissar position did not allow me. Lakeev sent away and showed him a combination of a fist pressed to the elbow with the other hand, one of the pilots of the neighboring 2nd regiment ... "***

Why are these hard-hitting stories about the "insignia of military distinction" of the command of the 14th SAD? Not at all to disturb the memory of long-dead people, but solely to explain why all the figures and all the reports signed by them should not be taken as "ultimate truth" ...

The very first "candidate" for destruction by the first surprise strike of the Luftwaffe could be considered the 15th SAD. This division - three fighter and one "assault" (actually armed with obsolete I-15bis fighters) regiment - was deployed at the very tip of the so-called "Lviv ledge". Two regiments of this division (23rd and 28th) were re-equipped with MiG-3s, which, according to the strange logic of Soviet historians, due to the fact that these aircraft were not mastered by the flight crew, also increased its chances of becoming an object of fleeting extermination. In fact, both of these

regiments were alerted even before the first shots were fired at the border and met the enemy already in the air. The fighters of the division were very active: the pilots of the 23rd IAP (66 pilots) completed 124 sorties on the first day of the war, the 28th IAP (52 pilots) - 114 sorties. (94) Based on the Enemy Aircraft Destroyed Report, on the first day of the war, the division destroyed 15 enemy aircraft and another 50 (including 7 identified as "reconnaissance aircraft") between 23 and 30 June. With all the reservations about the inevitable overestimation of the number of enemy aircraft shot down, it should be noted that in June the 41st, the 15th SAD became the most productive fighter unit in the Air Force of the Southwestern Front. The consequences of seven German air raids

on the airfield of the 23rd IAP in Adamy were expressed in the fact that 13 aircraft were put out of action. (94) Probably, many of them received only minimal damage, since, again, judging by the report of the Front Air Force Commander, 34 MiG-3s and 8

"I-16". (148) In total, from 22 to 24 June inclusive, the division lost 70 aircraft on the ground. The figure is large - however, almost all of it consists of the losses of the materiel of the 66th assault aviation regiment (58 I-15bis biplanes and 5 of the newest Il-2) - in all the above numbers of the Front Air Force, this regiment and these aircraft have never been taken into account. During the same period, 17 fighters of the division were shot down in the air, another 25 "did not return

from a combat mission." We do not know the real (confirmed by the enemy) number of aircraft shot down by the pilots of the 15th SAD, but it can be assumed that our own losses in the air were twice the number of enemy aircraft shot down. Yes, strictly speaking, a fighter formation is required to shoot down more than lose, but for the first days of the war, even such a level of performance could be considered quite acceptable. And only from the end of June - the beginning of July, something was wrong with the 15th SAD: in the first week of July, it claims only 8 victories, and then completely disappears from the reports of the front air force command. (161)

Now we will try to estimate the size and structure of the losses of the Air Force of the

Southwestern Front as a whole. The report of General Astakhov, Commander of the Air Force of the Front, dated August 21, 1941 (148), which we repeatedly mentioned, was published in SBD No. 36 in abbreviated form (the compilers of the collection did not hide this, noting the breaks in the text with ellipses). A. Isaev cites (with reference to the same archival file - TsAMO RF, f.229, op.181, d.25) a summary of aircraft losses in the period from 22 to 30 June inclusive. In addition, he, with reference to the Journal of Combat Operations of the Air Force of the Southwestern Front (TsAMO RF, f.229, op. from 25 to 27 June. For ease of use, we will summarize all the numbers in a single Table 25.

### ***Table 25***

	22— 24.06	25- 27.06	28— 30.06	22— 30.06	22— 30.06	22— 30.06	22— 30.06
Сбиты в воздухе, не вернулись с боевого задания	147	89	157	393	393	393	393
Уничтожены на аэродромах противником	234	34	36	304	304	304	304
Оставлены на аэродромах, уничтожены при отходе	31	? (15?)	62	108	108	108	108
Разбиты в катастрофах и авариях	36	? (35?)	35	106	106	106	106
ВСЕГО:	448	173	290	911	911	911	911

Note: - the

figures in the column "June 28–30" were obtained by calculation by subtracting the sum of the figures in the first and second columns from the total figures in the last column "June 22–30";

- the original document does not indicate the number of aircraft left at the airfields and broken in accidents during the period of June 25-27; the figures given in the table (15 and 35) were obtained by calculation from the conditional assumption of a uniform distribution of the number of accidents in each of the "three-day periods".

The information presented in Table 25 is extremely informative. First of all, it unconditionally refutes the myth about the destruction of Soviet aviation on the first day (in a milder version - "in the first days") of the war. Even after the loss of 911 aircraft (and taking into account the real losses of the enemy), the Air Force of the Southwestern Front outnumbered the 5th Air Corps of the Luftwaffe by 2.5 times. Taking into account the aircraft of the 4th DBA Corps, this superiority becomes even greater. Losses accounted for as losses on the

ground (304 + 108) amounted to 412 aircraft, i.e., about 21% of the original number. This is a huge percentage - if we compare it with the "normal", confirmed by the statistics of many years of the war, the share of combat losses of aircraft from enemy air strikes on airfields. And this is very little - in comparison with the legend about the "first annihilating blow." We emphasize once again that 21% of the initial number of aircraft was lost not at dawn on June 22 and not on the first day of the war, but over the course of nine days! True, it should be noted that D. Khazanov, referring to the same archival file (TsAMO RF, f. 229,

op.181, d.25), claims that **"304 aircraft became victims of air raids, and at least 276 aircraft were abandoned or blown up at border airfields."** (167, p. 44) In this case, as we see, the number of "ground losses" increases to 580 units - however, Mr. Khazanov's incorrect handling of archival references is not a secret ...

From the obvious conclusions, we now turn to difficult questions. First of all, the difference in the assessment of the consequences of a strike on airfields in the first three days of the war is striking. The report of the Commander of the Air Force of the front (see above) speaks of 237 aircraft destroyed and damaged on June 22, 23 and 24. Data are given on the number of restored cars, which is many times greater than the number of damaged ones in the first days. On the other hand, almost the same number of aircraft (234 units) is classified as an irretrievable loss in the Front Air Force railway department. This contradiction can have two explanations, namely: the aircraft damaged at the border airfields (first of all, this applies to the 14th SAD and the 15th SAD) went into the category of irretrievable losses due to the retreat of the ground forces of the Red Army and the panic abandonment of the airfields; or one of the senior commanders of the Air Force of the Southwestern Front made a big "mistake" in compiling reports.

The last number in the first row of Table 25 also deserves close attention, in which all three components of aircraft losses in the air were combined into an indistinguishable sum. In the original document (the report of the Commander of the Air Force of the Front), three numbers are indicated:

- 180 shot down in air battles; -

- 70 shot down by anti-

- aircraft guns; - 143 did not return from a

combat mission. What is behind this phrase: "did not return from a combat mission"? Where is the plane? Where is the crew? If we assume the simplest, namely: the plane was shot down by enemy fighters or anti-aircraft guns, but there were no witnesses to this event (or they could not pass a report to the appropriate headquarters), then it is possible, as a first approximation, to "distribute" these 143 missing aircraft to those shot down by fighters and shot down by anti-aircraft guns in the proportion of 18 to 7 (that is, the same as the known losses). As a result of these undisputed, but



acceptable for an approximate assessment of arithmetic operations, we come to the following loss figures: - 283

shot down in air battles; - PO  
shot down by anti-aircraft

guns. Strictly speaking, such proportions are not typical for that war - the losses from anti-aircraft fire are most likely overstated, the losses of air battles are underestimated. In general, for the entire period of the war, losses from anti-aircraft artillery fire amounted to 21-25% of the total number of combat losses; in the first nine days of the war, when Soviet aircraft were operating over their own territory and only in very rare cases flew over the front line (which is confirmed by many documents), the proportion of losses from anti-aircraft fire should have been even less - in our conditional "calculation" it amounted to 28 %. But even this, most likely underestimated, number of losses in air battles (283 aircraft) is of great surprise. Why? Because it is almost equal to the declared number of victories of German fighters from JG-3. And this cannot be, because it can never be.

JG-3 fighters claimed 258 Soviet aircraft shot down (182 between 22 and 27 June and 76 in the last three days of June). (162) From this number of declared victories, it is necessary, for starters, to subtract the bombers of the 4th DBA Corps - at least on June 26, German fighters reported 26 DB-3fs shot down. (167, p. 35) Then, the number of declared victories should be divided by the most modest overestimation factor, i.e., reduced by 2-3 times ... 100-120 enemy aircraft shot down in 9 days by the forces of three fighter groups of the JG-3 squadron, this is a great record. It is absolutely impossible to believe that the German pilots reported on a LESS number of aircraft than were shot down in reality. It is interesting to note that Mr. Isaev himself could not fail to notice the absurdity of these figures, but hastened to give them such an amusing explanation: "I will ***also note a curious effect: the side that wins the air war most often hardly overestimates its successes.***"(162) Alas, nothing like this has been noted in the history of World War II (see Appendix 7). In the victorious 44th year, the "overestimation factor" in the reports of the Soviet Air Force rose to an outstanding mark of 6 to 1.

It remains to be assumed that the actual number of Southwestern Front Air Force aircraft shot down in air battles was significantly less than what is indicated in the command reports, and the term "did not return from the mission" is a kind of euphemism (a word that replaces another, less euphonious word), the real content of which needs serious clarification. Most likely, such an assumption will seem strange and unreasonable to the reader. We will return to this issue and to this term ("did not return from a combat mission") in the future - and more than once - but for now, having completed a brief overview of the events in the sky over Ukraine, let's move on to the other, northern flank of the war front.

## **PRIBALTIAN OVO**

In the offensive zone of the German Army Group North, from the Neman to the shores of the Gulf of Finland, the 1st Air Corps of the 1st Air Force of the Luftwaffe operated. It included a fairly powerful group of bomber aircraft (8 groups, not counting the "coastal" group KGr-806, operationally subordinate to the fleet command), which was armed with 240 Junkers Ju-88, of which about 192 vehicles were in combat readiness. The fighter force consisted of three JG-54 squadron groups and two (4th and 5th) squadrons from II / JG-53, which were armed with a total of 164 aircraft (131 in combat readiness). All "Messers" in the 1st Air Corps were the latest modification of the Bf-109F. Theoretically, three groups of Soviet aviation could become an adversary of the 1st Air Corps: the Air

Force of the Baltic Special Military District (North-Western Front), the Air Force of the Leningrad Military District (Northern Front) and the Air Force of the Baltic Fleet. Strictly speaking, this is how it all happened practically - just not right away. As noted in the previous chapter, until the very end of June, the Air Force of the Northern Front and the Air Force of the Baltic Fleet were fighting (or, to be more precise and honest, they showed some activity) on the "Finnish front". As a result, in the first week of the war, German aviation was opposed only by the Air Force of the North-Western Front. However, one "only" Air Force S-3 f. (8 fighter and 8

bomber regiments consisting of five air divisions) surpassed the 1st Luftwaffe air corps in the number of bomber crews - 1.7 times, in the number of fighter pilots - 2.7 times. The Air Force of the Baltic OBO received 139 new MiG-1 / MiG-3 fighters, which is slightly less than the total number of enemy fighters. It is also worth noting that the fighter regiments of the Baltic District (10th IAP, 15th IAP, 31st IAP) were among the first to receive MiGs, in the winter of 1940-1941.

The first report of the headquarters of the North-Western Front was sent to the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR at 0610 hours. Already in it, the first failure is detected, caused by Stalin's too intricate military-political "games":

at 0400 on 22 June 1941 the Germans started fighting. The enemy air force bombarded the airfields of Vindava, Panevezys, Siauliai, Kovno... Our air force is in the air. Until I received your order not to fly over the border, I received through General Safronov your order not to fly over the border without permission. He took measures to bomb the enemy without overflying the border ...

**(9, p. 36)**

How does it feel to "bomb the enemy without crossing the border"? Where else could he be found at 5-6 am on June 22?

Nevertheless, in an atmosphere of general confusion and confusion, some parts of the Air Force of the front began to act according to pre-war plans, and these plans, as you know, involved bombing airfields, railway junctions, bridges and crossings in the adjacent territory. In particular, **"on June 22, 1941, at 4:50 am, 25 SB aircraft from the 9th BAP of the VVS S-Z f. flew to the bombing of the German airfield near Tilsit ... "** (VIZh, 8\1988) As befits a conscientious historian, A.G. Fedorov gives after this information a link to the archival fund (TsAMO f.861, op.525025, d.2). Of particular value to this evidence is the fact that it was published not just by a professional historian, the author of one of

the best "pre-perestroika" books on the history of the Soviet Air Force (41), but also a military pilot, who from November 1941 commanded this

same 9th BAP. Other commanders preferred to simply wait until the authorities sort it out among themselves. Still others (including the command of the Baltic OBO) rushed to "grab the hands" of their subordinates, who began to fulfill the instructions of the "red packets". The story of Lieutenant General V.P. Bulanov, who met the war as the navigator of the Ar-2 bomber in the 46th BAP (Siauliai airfield, 45 crews, 61 SB and Ar-2 aircraft), allows us to imagine how it all looked in real life: "...June **21 the regiment was relocated to a field airfield** (hereinafter, it is highlighted by me. - **M.S.**). **Why - there was no explanation. They ordered the planes to be camouflaged. At 4:30 we were alerted. — How, what? Do not say anything. At about 5 o'clock they give the first task: to bomb the Germans who are forcing the Neman River in the Tilsit region. The first squadron takes off, the second takes off - nine aircraft each. We take off with the third squadron. The first nine bombed, the second bombed ... We were already approaching the Neman, and suddenly the team - to return ... We return with a full bomb load. We sit down** (it is strictly forbidden to land with bombs, in such a case even the simplest bomb releaser has an idle mode, without an explosion, dropping bombs. - **M.S.**) **We put the planes, went to have breakfast - and then suddenly a German reconnaissance aircraft flies by, and bombers appear behind it " Heinkel-111". Also nine. The Germans began to bomb the aircraft parking areas, and as soon as they bombed, they passed at low level and began to fire machine guns along the edge of the forest. They made a call once, combed, the second ... The Germans bombed the target, dropped some of the bombs into the forest and left without loss. Finally, everything calmed down. We started to get ready for the airfield... As soon as we started to approach, our bombs in the planes began to explode... We are tearing back! Losses**

**in the equipment remaining at the airfield turned out to be significant. There was also one dead ... ” (128)** Special report of the 3rd Directorate (military counterintelligence) NPO No. 2 / 35552 of June 28, 1941 giv

... The main losses of the [7th air division] relate to the 46th SBAP and are explained by the disorganization and confusion on the part of the regiment commander, Major Senko, and the chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel Kanunov, who brought all the personnel into battle during the first enemy raid.

panic state.

On June 22, the 46th SBAP lost 20 aircraft, of which 10 were destroyed during an enemy raid on the Siauliai airfield, and the rest were shot down during combat missions to bombard enemy troops in the Tilsit area and St. Killen. Three nine aircraft of the 46th SBAP were released to perform combat missions without escort of their fighters. Observation posts were not organized, the headquarters of the regiment had no connection with them and did not know about their existence ...

**(151)**

Unfortunately, the 46th BAP was no exception. According to the memorandum of the head of the 3rd department of the North-Western Front, divisional commissar Babich No. 03 dated June 28, the commander of the 54th BAP (Vilnius airfield, 54 crew, 75 aircraft, including 7 of the latest Pe-2s) "on the first day of the **war gave the order to raise the 3rd squadron and wait for further orders in the air. The squadron, armed with Ar-2 aircraft and four SB aircraft, waited for an order in the air for 1.5 hours, as a result of which it could not complete the combat mission, since it could only be in flight for 3–4 hours. The Ar-2 planes were forced to land on their airfield with bombs, and the SB flight, which flew out on a combat mission, completely died after 1.5 hours in the air ...** ". (151)

In the meantime, in distant Moscow, they finally adopted a much more intelligible Directive No. 2. In particular, it said: **"... With powerful strikes by bomber and attack aircraft, destroy aircraft at enemy airfields and bomb groupings of its ground forces. Air strikes should be carried out to the depth of German territory up to 100-150 km. Bomb Königsberg and Memel..."**

This directive was signed at 7:15 a.m. Plus time for encryption, transmission, decryption. In general, the first 4–5 hours of the war were wasted. There is no reason to attach "fateful" significance to this incident, but additional nervousness was introduced into the already tense atmosphere of the first hours of the war. After Directive No. finally reached the attention of the PribOVO command, the activity of Soviet aviation increased markedly.

... The telephone operator connected us with  
Vindava: - Mogilevsky? How are you? Fine? Take the package that is in your safe, open it and act as it is written there (*hereinafter, it is highlighted by me.* - M.S.). The regiment commander (*40th BAP, 54 SB aircraft, 48 crews.* - M.S.) confirmed that he understood the order and began to fulfill it ... At ten two minutes on June 22, 1941, our red-star bombers headed for west.... ... Pleased with Major Mogilevsky. “

**The raid on Königsberg, Touragen and Memel** ended successfully,” he said by phone. There was powerful anti-aircraft fire, but the bombs were dropped exactly on the targets. We have no losses.

### **(54)**

The book of memoirs of the commissar of the 6th Air Division of the Air Force of the North-Western Front A.G. Rytov, from which we have quoted this remarkable testimony, was published by the Military Publishing House in 1968. The young officer Volodya Rezun then did not even guess that he was to become Viktor Suvorov, the author of the "Icebreaker" ...

Bomb attacks on the adjacent territory continued throughout the day. The operational report of the front headquarters No. 03, signed at 22.00 on June 23, reports that **"The Air Force fought enemy aircraft during the day, operated at the airfields of Insterburg, Koenigsberg, Priekule, Memel, Tilsit ..."**. In a report on the combat operations of the Air Force of the North-Western Front, compiled in July 1942 (that is, a year after the start of the war, when to explain

the reasons for the defeat were no longer needed), it is noted that **"on the first and second days, the Air Force attacked airfields and enemy troops in the areas of Memel, Tilsit, Gumbinien. The Air Force of the North-Western Front operated bomber aircraft in groups of 6-18 aircraft under the cover of I-153 and I-16 at the indicated objects.** (9, 185) Of course, the exchange of blows was mutual. In intelligence report No. 03 of the headquarters of

the S-Z.f. from 12.00 two episodes were named: **"at 4.55 5 aircraft bombarded the airfield in Panevezys"** (*this is the base airfield of the same 9th BAP, from which 25 "SB" flew out at 4.50 to bomb the German airfield near Tilsit*) and **" at 9 hours 25 minutes they bombarded airfield in Šiauliai"** (*this is most likely the above-mentioned episode with the bombing of the airfield of the 46th BAP, where the regiment's indiscipline led "during the first enemy raid, all personnel into a panic state"*). In addition, the report refers to the bombing by large forces (**"up to an aviation regiment"**) of the cities of Kaunas, Siauliai, by small groups (from 5 to 12 aircraft) - Alytus, Kalvaria, Vindava, Yurburg.

It is highly noteworthy that intelligence report No. 03 ends with these words: **"The enemy has not yet brought into action significant air forces, limited to the action of individual groups and single aircraft."** (9, p. 40) No misprint. This is exactly the summary of June 22, 1941 **"A crushing blow ... an armada of fascist aircraft ... endless rows of crows with spider swastikas ..."**

What losses did the Air Force units of the Baltic OVO (North-Western Front) suffer on the first day of the war? Unfortunately, the author does not have an exact and exhaustive answer to this question (however, who has one?). Operational summary of the S-3 headquarters f. dated 22.00 on June 22 summed up the results of that very long day as follows: **"... Enemy aircraft bombed communication centers, settlements, warehouses, airfields during the day** (airfields, as we see, are indicated only as one of many targets. - *M.S.*) **and caused serious damage to Siauliai and Kaunas. Our Air Force, performing tasks, fought against enemy aircraft and bombed the accumulation of tanks and tank columns in the Tilsit region and in the Alytus direction. Losses: 56 aircraft destroyed, 32 damaged at airfields"** (9, p. 44)

Once again, we note that "damaged" is not the same as "destroyed".

Now let's look at these numbers from the other side of the front. German fighters from II/JG-53 reported 17 Soviet aircraft shot down. The number of claimed victories for JG-54 is unknown to the author. In the first (not very accurate) approximation, it can be assumed that it was 3 times larger, i.e., about 50. There is little accuracy in such an estimate - but in the reports of fighters about the planes they shot down, the "accuracy" is even less. Based on the usual 2-3-fold overestimation, it can be assumed that on June 22, German fighters shot down no more than 25-35 Soviet aircraft in the air. Even taking into account possible losses from anti-aircraft guns and from the fire of aerial gunners of German bombers, the report of the headquarters of the North-Western Front, at least, did not underestimate (and possibly exaggerate) the losses of the front's aviation in the air. In comparison with the initial number of aircraft (about 1100 units), the loss of the Air Force S-3 f. amounted to less than 10%, and this number of losses included vehicles temporarily damaged at airfields.

The very low intensity of air battles on June 22 is also evidenced by the number of downed German aircraft. The above-mentioned summary of the S-3 headquarters f. claims that **"19 enemy aircraft were shot down by aviation, and 8 aircraft were shot down by anti-aircraft artillery. These figures are being verified."** Very modest results for 8 fighter regiments. Especially if you compare this report with the real losses of the Luftwaffe on June 22, 1941 (2 bombers and 1 fighter were irretrievably lost, another 6 vehicles were damaged).

Now let's move on from the general figures to the important details of the events. Here is how the commissar of the 6th Air Division Rytov describes the first day of the war in his memoirs: **"... A few minutes later, I was convinced that the Nazis had done a lot of craters on the working area of the airfield, but the damage from the raid was insignificant. Airplanes began to disperse here in advance, from June 21, far beyond the runway, and now only three aircraft from the F.A. regiment were on fire. Agaltsov, who had just flown to Mitava from some Estonian airfield ... Commander of the 31st**



**bomber regiment, Fedor Ivanovich Dobysh, reported that his unit took to the air twice to avoid being hit .... Back in the war in China, I remembered Dobysh as an executive commander ... ” (54)** Paying tribute to Comrade

Dobysh's diligence and his many years of combat experience, we note that he only conscientiously carried out numerous orders to transfer the district's aviation to combat readiness, which (as noted in previous chapters) were given up a few days before the first enemy raids. On June 27, Rytov again visited the 31st BAP. **“Soon I again went to the Mitava airfield, to Dobysh. He still held**

**his regiment in his fist. Every day he organized sorties on combat missions. Despite enemy bombardments, he managed to save the aircraft almost completely. The experience he gained in China and in the battles with the Finns had an effect ... ”** And here is the picture that Rytov discovers at noon on June 22 in the 21st IAP:

... I returned to the Riga airfield. At the command post I was met by the commander of the 21st Fighter Regiment, Major Miroshnichenko.

— How is the situation? I ask. - There was a bombing. True, not strong. Aircraft dispersed, the pilots in the cockpit. They are waiting for commands.

Noticing me, the battalion commissar Yurov approached: “People are in a fighting mood... ...

Somewhat later, Yurov sent a political report. It was written in pencil, on a crumpled piece of paper torn from the edges. The message breathed fiery passion. I did not catch even a hint of confusion in it. Yurov briefly reported: nine (??? - M.S.) enemy

planes...

The next day, June 23, the Germans tried to carry out a massive attack on the Riga airport.

... Air observation posts reported that a large group of fascist bombers was heading for Riga. The fighters of the 21st Aviation Regiment rose to meet them ... In the very first minutes of the battle, our pilots shot down three Junkers on the way to the city. A small group of bombers still managed to break through to the airfield, but they did not cause significant damage. The bridge across the Western Dvina also remained intact. On June 24, the Germans again launched a raid on the Riga airfield. They managed to set fire to two fuel tanks. Two Red Army soldiers died in single combat with a fire ...

Yes, dear reader, I fully understand your confusion. Instead of a normal story about a sudden strike by the Luftwaffe, about the flaming wreckage of red-star aircraft and "crying from impotence" commanders, there are some strange testimonies about bombing attacks on German airfields, about dispersed Soviet aircraft in advance and the "fighting mood" of Soviet pilots ... Do not worry in vain. We will search further. Who seeks - he finds:

The slumber was broken by a loud roar. I got up. In the large window, the dawn of Sunday morning, June 22, 1941, was engaged. On a grassy airfield, gray with dew, I saw funnels, like a dotted line, blocking the entire airfield (***the action takes place at the Kaunas airfield.*** - M.S.) ... A huge fire was blazing on the territory of the 15th regiment. Unexpectedly, ***four triples (hereinafter, it is emphasized by me.*** - M.S.) of Heinkel-111 bombers, accompanied by Messerschmitts,

suddenly appeared at a low altitude . As best we could, we clung to the base of the ditch. Bomb explosions covered the airfield...

**Red Army soldiers and several technicians ran away** from the entrance and the guardhouse to a small grove . We decided to get one by one to the surviving aircraft and try to take off along the edge of the airfield. Main airfield

everything was in the craters ... I rushed towards the headquarters of the regiment, where I-16 fighter could be seen in the parking lot. The car was intact. Fortunately, I came across a Red Army soldier from the guards, **who did not have time to escape**. At my order, he ran for a parachute, and I rushed to the autostarter, hoping to find a driver near him. He was right there. Everything worked out well. We drove up to the plane. Out of breath, a Red Army soldier brought a parachute, explaining: "**No one was there, we had to break down the door.**" Having connected the ratchets of the starter and the aircraft engine, I climbed into the cockpit. As soon as I was about to give a hand command to spin up, the car door opened, the driver jumped out and rushed towards the ditch. Looking up, I understood everything. A group of bombers was flying overhead. I had to follow the example of the driver. Similar attempts to start the fighter engine were repeated twice. Finally, the propeller turned and the motor started working... Once in my native, familiar environment, I felt confident. Looking at the red tiled roofs, I turned to

Karmelava (***the field airfield of the 31st IAP*** - M.S.). Soon I saw the airfield, the funnels on it, lying in the rye "moment". At the edge of the forest, near the aircraft stands, there are several fires. After landing taxied to the parking lot of the squadron. Here our planes were under camouflage nets... A large enemy bomber appeared, escorted by fighters. Bombs were exploding on the airfield, fighters stormed ground targets, shooting taxiing MiGs. The bombers that were in the air of our fighters, **but after the first short burst, the machine guns did not work**. This sy~~tem~~<sup>tem</sup>(synchronizer) **had not yet been debugged** ... Now, after the failure of weapons in the air, gunsmith technicians removed the hood from the engine and tried to eliminate the defect ... Feeling impunity, enemy aircraft became group. insolent. The bombers went group after attacked  
Between bombings

fighters stormed all visible targets at the airfield. Literally every person was chased. The airfield was completely covered with craters and upturned boulders. Greater were the losses in personnel. Near the parking lots of the planes in different places lay the dead in pools of gore. **At about 12 noon**, a horse with a cart appeared from the side of the village.

It was our waitresses who were taking lunch to the airfield. They were dressed in colorful dresses and handkerchiefs. Almost everyone, except me, had no appetite. I quickly swallowed several portions of the second and compote. Before the girls had time to drive off, enemy bombers appeared. The entire load of bombs fell on our squadron ... Not far from the gap, a cart wheel stuck out of the ground. The horse has disappeared. One could see a sprinkled shred of women's clothing - white with blue polka dots ... Of all the raids by German bombers during these **eight hours** of the first day of the war, this raid seemed to me the most terrible. After this raid, **it was no longer possible to take off from the airfield, and there was nothing to do**. Somewhat earlier, **seven "MiGs" took off and headed for Riga**. This is all that remains of **the 60 aircraft of the 31st regiment ...**

Book of memoirs B.V. Veselovsky, excerpts from which were quoted above, was published in 1996. (123) The book is relatively new, but at the same time Veselovsky's story about the events of the first day of the war can be considered absolutely standard-type. This is exactly how it has always been described: a surprise attack, a sleeping airfield, non-stop German air strikes one after another, the hopeless helplessness of Soviet pilots (the planes are "not mastered", machine guns do not fire), and as a result - "take off from the airfield in eight hours was no longer possible, and

on nothing."

If now we "twist the sharpness" a little, then many very important details will become noticeable. At the airfield of the 15th Air Regiment in Kaunas, the pilots were awakened by the explosions of enemy bombs. No on-duty fighter unit, not even the usual one, awake all night

orderly, at a large base airfield was not. The unit commander is not. There is no officer on duty. Nobody is in command. The author of the memoirs managed to take off by accident - with the help of those who "did not have time to escape." Airfields (both in Kaunas and Karmelava) are being bombed and shelled almost non-stop, by large groups of bombers, and even with fighter cover.

Some private inaccuracies become noticeable already at the first acquaintance with the text. So, for example, there were more aircraft in the 31st IAP - in addition to 60 (according to other sources - 54) new MiG-3s, there were also 32 I-16s, of which 28 were (as of June 1) in good condition. At the very least, but almost the same (32.5 cars) was the average number of serviceable aircraft in the Luftwaffe fighter groups ... The surviving archival documents do not confirm the picture of such a complete extermination of the 31st Fighter Regiment: by the time the regiment was disbanded (July 14, 1941) pilots of the 31st IAP flew 714 sorties (i.e., an average of 31 sorties per day) and reported 13 enemy aircraft shot down. (94) However, all these insignificant details only distract from the main question. Namely: such a deadly result of the first meeting with a real enemy was tragically inevitable? Or was there criminal negligence on the part of the commanders in this case? In particular, what prevented six months from checking and adjusting the work of weapons synchronizers - is it really a "sudden attack"?

Let's not puzzle over such complex issues. Everything is much easier. Before us is an example of a psychological phenomenon called "lying like an eyewitness." This is when, as a result of many years of ideological "pumping", a living witness begins to write not what he saw with his own eyes, but what he listened to with his ears for decades.

What are these suspicions based on? On a simple comparison with other memories of another eyewitness and participant in the same events. Testifies N.I. Petrov, fighter pilot of the 31st IAP:

... We flew from the Kaunas airfield to the Karmelava airfield, it was already 3 days before June 22, 1941. Before the flight from the Kaunas airfield, we were informed that

the district exercises of the Air Force of the Baltic OVO will be held. Upon arrival at the Karmelava airfield, everything was **put on alert as far as possible ...**

... On the 21st, on Saturday, I took over as the unit's duty officer. **At three o'clock in the morning** on June 22, the chief of staff of the SAD, which we were part of (**8th SAD**. - M.S.), called and ordered me **to announce a combat alert**, the chief of staff of the regiment, upon arrival at the command post, call the division headquarters ... I thought it was war. I immediately handed over to the chief of staff of the regiment, Captain Sergeev, and announced the alarm for the regiment. Upon the arrival of the flight crew to the aircraft, **soon after a few minutes**, green rockets from the command post of the regiment soared into the air. Recently, there have often been combat alerts (training), **so everything was worked out, lost, who, when, what is doing ...** Having received signal to take off, they began to take off ...

With a left turn, we headed for Kaunas, gaining 1500 meters, we saw the Kaunas airfield, the hangars were on fire, the hangar building was on fire, the regiment headquarters was on fire (**so far, a complete coincidence with Veselovsky's book**. - M.S.). Flying over the Kaunas airfield, we see **several** bomb craters on the airfield (**Veselovskiy's** "airfield was full of craters"). To the left, above 700 meters, a link of 2 pairs of Me-110 and 4 Me-109 went west at speeds "with smoke" (that is, they **turned on the afterburner mode of the engines and evaded the battle**. - M.S. ). Below, on a collision course, 6 I-153 "Seagull" aircraft passed, these are neighbors from the 15th Fighter Regiment. They flew west for about 15 minutes at an altitude of 3000 m, turned back - everything is calm in the air (**alas, no traces of the bombers that repeatedly bombed the Kaunas airfield, according to Veselovsky, are found**. - M.S.) ... Everyone landed safely. As I taxied into my seat, my technician points out a crater ahead, from about a 100-kilogram bomb. This means that during our takeoff, several bombs fell on the airfield, obviously from a great height. What no one saw, and besides, it was not heard,

since many of their engines were noisy (hence, there were no losses from these bombs - a burning plane would have been noticed at any noise. - M.S.) ...

They brought breakfast, but no one had an appetite, and then it flashed at low level " Me-110. **The shooter from the rear hemisphere fired one burst of machine guns, but not aiming. There were no casualties ...**

Later, until 16.00, everything was calm, in mostly flew in pairs **to cover their airfield** and the railway junction of Kaunas ...

### **(125)**

So, late breakfast (or early lunch) was. Perhaps the waitresses were in colorful dresses. The contrast of this peaceful scene with the gloomy pictures of the outbreak of war was so great that it was engraved in the memory of eyewitnesses. There was only a terrible bombing, fragments of a dress in a funnel from a bomb explosion, a pile of corpses and other "black beauty". A lone Me-110 flew by, the shooter from the upper rear machine-gun point fired a burst and, of course, did not hit anyone on the ground. After that, "until 16 hours everything was calm." There is no mention of a failed weapon on the MiGs, and there was simply no one to shoot at in the morning.

Why does the author believe that N.I. Petrova more reliable? Firstly, because they are logical, they correspond to the real situation known to us from many other documents, while Veselovsky's story corresponds only to the generally accepted legend about "a sudden attack and defenseless airfields." Secondly, Veselovsky wrote a book, and his story turned out to be very "beautiful", while Petrov simply dictated his ingenuous memoirs to the interviewer (he dictated so ingenuously that I even had to make minimal syntactic editing of this text). Thirdly, and most importantly, the bombing of the airfield in Karmelava eventually appears in Petrov's memoirs. Only at other times ("wrong" from the point of view of the dogma about "sudden

attack") and with quite realistic (confirmed by enemy documents) consequences:

... From the command post, the order: "Link - in the air!" Lieutenant Smyslov, I and Akimov quickly get on the planes. We started the engines, taxied out - and then **red rockets from the command post: "takeoff is prohibited."** Two pairs of Me-109s appear at an altitude of 800-1000 meters and pass over the airfield, then two Heinkel-111 nines approach. Explosions of bombs are heard at a distance from the airfield, it can be seen that they are being thrown along the highway. They began to fall on the border of the airfield, throwing one bomb at a time. They fall with a flight in relation to our aircraft, near which we are, almost in the middle of the airfield. A large group flew by, but only a few bombs were dropped. When they flew up to our airfield, it seemed that such a group would have nowhere to go. And they dropped only **5 bombs** on the airfield and the borders of

the airfield ... We didn't have time to come to our senses, as **three pairs of Me-109s appeared**, passed over the airfield at an altitude of about 1000 meters. They reorganized into an elongated bearing, **as over a training ground**, and began to shoot with aimed fire at each aircraft. First of all, on our link **(which was stopped in the middle of the airfield by a "red rocket."** - M.S.) of aircraft that were on the airfield undisguised. We managed to run to the border of the airfield, where there was a hole dried up from water. There lay a sow with piglets. We sheltered near them, where it is drier **(after that, how can you not believe in the veracity of N.I. Petrov's memoirs?** - M.S.) ... After the enemy's assault actions, he approached his plane. Oil flows from under the hood of the engine, the crankcase

is broken. The shell hit the rudder, half of the plating on the rudder was missing (it was percale). Large damage on other nearby aircraft ...



The most remarkable thing about this whole fragment is the strange (to put it extremely politely) reaction of the fighter regiment to the raid of enemy bombers. There were at least three squadrons of new MiG-3 fighters at the Karmelava airfield. (94) Instead of raising them into the air and attacking slow-moving bombers moving with minimal cover, the command post stops the take-off of even those fighters that were already at the start with a rocket. Even if we don't talk about high things (Charter, Oath), such, so to speak, "tactics" does not reduce, but increases losses - if a fighter ceases to be a hunter, it becomes a game. Which was confirmed in just a few minutes. So, the 31st IAP was really attacked at the airfield and suffered significant losses in aircraft. This happened after 4 p.m., that is, at least 12

hours after the start of the war. This blow of the enemy was neither the first nor unexpected. The pilots and commanders of the 31st IAP knew for certain that the war had begun. No orders "prohibiting the shooting down of German aircraft" (if only such orders were in reality) were no longer in effect. Losses were incurred solely and only due to

passivity of the command and personnel, which allowed

a small enemy **"to shoot with aimed fire at each aircraft, as at a training ground."** The episode with the shooting

of the MiGs standing on the ground finds indirect confirmation in the reports of the German fighter squadron JG-53. Within five minutes, from 16.43 to 16.48, the headquarters flight (4 aircraft) of the II1/JG-53 fighter group allegedly shot down 6 Soviet aircraft, identified as "I-17" (German designation "MiG-3"). Group III / JG-53 operated at the junction of the Western and Northwestern fronts and in this zone could only meet MiGs from the 15th or 31st air regiments. For a fighter unit, six victories in five minutes of air combat is a bit much, but for "execution, like at a training ground" - just right ...

There is in the story of N.I. Petrov, another phrase that deserves the closest attention: **"mostly flew in pairs to cover their airfield."** Here is the answer - simple, quite realistic, not requiring the invention of myths about "aviation destroyed at airfields" - to the question of why thousands

participants in the war unanimously repeat that "in the first days of the war, we did not see our aviation." And how could the infantrymen, tankers and artillerymen see her if she was spinning in circles, "covering her airfields"?

Of course, according to the story of one middle-aged man about the military operations of one air regiment, one cannot make big generalizations. Therefore, we turn again to the reports of the "special departments" drawn up in the wake of the events. It turns out that not only nameless ordinary soldiers, but also commanders in high ranks could not find traces of the aviation of the North-Western Front: ***"Aviation units of the Air Force of the Front, due to the incapacitation of all airfields*** (from which, at the time of writing this report, Luftwaffe fighter groups operated quite successfully - *M.S.) on the territory of Lithuania and most of Latvia, were relocated to various points of the airfields of the Pskov hub, however, by 11.00 on June 28, communication with the air regiments, offices of the 8th, 7th and 57th air divisions was not established and about nothing is known about their actions... Some commanders of air regiments and air divisions, not receiving orders from the front, move from place to place on their own (7th air division and 54th SBAP), and this further confuses the issuance of combat orders to them..."* (151 )

"Moving from place to place..." An interesting wording. It is noteworthy that for all the discrepancy between the form and content of the memoirs of Veselovsky and Petrov, they tell about these "transitions" in almost the same words:

... By evening, a command was received to get into the cars. Airplanes that cannot be flown, if I am not mistaken, burn. When they set off, it became known that they were going to Riga, where the pilots would fly on the surviving aircraft, mainly the command of the regiment and squadrons. As we were approaching Riga, a rumor spread that Riga was occupied by the Germans. All the counter, traveling from Riga, confirmed this. We believed, turned around and went along the route to Sebez, on the former old border (I don't remember why we went there exactly) ... Having reached Sebez, we went to the commandant's office, where the commandant explained that he had just talked

everything is fine there, there are no Germans there, go there immediately ...

... In the location of our squadron, regiment commander Putivko appeared from somewhere. His order was brief: "The personnel of the regiment **individually, whoever can**, get to Riga, to the district headquarters." Together with a classmate at the school, Lieutenant Pylaev, I headed for the highway Kaunas - Siauliai - Riga ... The air now and then resounded with the roar of German aircraft carrying a deadly load. Our planes were not visible in the sky (but how could the pilots who left their planes at an abandoned airfield see them? - M.S.) ... Soon an emka overtook us and stopped. The door opened, and the commander

of our division, Colonel Gushchin, called out to us. He asked us about the state of affairs in the regiment. To our question, how are things in the other four regiments of the division, he answered: "We don't know anything, Veselovsky. There is no communication with anyone (**and**

**this is true - how can you establish communication without a satellite terminal if the division commander is rushing "to Riga" in a passenger car?**). We cannot take you with us. You see, the car is packed. ... Passing cars slipped by. It was possible to stop one of them only with the help of

pistols. At last Riga appeared. We ended up at the district air force headquarters on 26-27

June...

"June 26-27..." For three or four days, fighter pilots, the "golden fund" of the Armed Forces, roamed the dusty roads, while the nasty enemy "voiced the air with the roar of German aircraft." And who was supposed to prevent this? And by the way, about communication. There was a connection. More precisely, there was a technical possibility to establish a connection. And even simpler - let's quote just two phrases from the report of the new (at that time) head of the communications department of the North-Western Front, Colonel Kurochkin, dated July 26, 1941: "... Radio communications have been working almost without interruptions since the first day of the war, **but headquarters**

*they reluctantly and clumsily used this means of communication at the beginning of the war ... The interruption of wire communication was qualified by everyone as a loss of communication ... ” (9, p. 191)*

Let's sum up some results. The 1st Air Fleet of the Luftwaffe irretrievably lost 5 fighters and 36 bombers in the skies of the Baltic States from 22 to 30 June "from enemy action and for unknown reasons" (see Appendix 6). A total of 41 combat aircraft, exactly one-tenth of the original number. The losses of the Air Force of the North-Western Front were incomparably greater. In the Central Archive of the RF Ministry of Defense, a document has been preserved: "Report on the combat activities of the S-3 Air Force f. for the year of the war" and Appendix No. 2 to this report, which provides detailed data on the losses of flight personnel and military equipment, broken down by months. (168) For convenience, let's summarize all the data on aircraft losses for June 1941 in two t

**Table 26**

	Было 22.06	Сбито в бою	Сбито З.А.	Не вернулись с боев. задан.	Уничтожены на аэродр.	Небоевые безвозврат.	Всего потеряно
«МиГ-3»	135	8	3	6	61	53	131
«И-16»	142	32	2	47	45	13	139
«И-153»	359	48	7	55	132	81	323
Итого:	636	88	12	108	238	147	593

**Table 27**

	Было 22.06	Сбито в бою	Сбито З.А.	Не вернулись с боев. задан.	Уничтожены на аэродр.	Небоевые безвозврат.	Всего потеряно
«СБ»	403	135	37	33	148	33	386
«Ар-2»	23				18	3	21
«Пе-2»	5			1	1		2
Итого:	431	135	37	34	167	36	409

Note: in Tables 26 and 27 the number of aircraft on 22.06 is indicated according to the above Report.

The first and, alas, obvious conclusion from these tables is that the Air Force of the North-Western Front was utterly defeated. From the huge group, which had more than a thousand combat aircraft in its arsenal, only memories remained. The losses of the MiG-3 and I-16 fighters cannot but horrify, the number of which has decreased from three hundred to seven units. Moreover, 84% of the latest fighters are destroyed or broken on the ground; only 8 out of 135 "migs" were lost in air combat. The picture of complete defeat is strikingly different from the situation on the Southwestern and even more so Southern fronts. The second and

also quite clear conclusion is that the losses of the first day of the war are about one tenth of the losses of the nine days of June. In other words, June 22 was not even the day of maximum average daily losses - not to mention the fact that this day did not become the day of the simultaneous destruction of most of the aircraft of the Air Force of the North-Western Front. The total number of aircraft declared "destroyed at airfields" (405 units) is many times greater than the highest estimates of irretrievable "ground" losses on the first day of the war. This is something that is beyond doubt. Then the questions

begin. The category "did not return from a combat mission" (a total of 142 aircraft) consists of fighters by three quarters - although, according to sound logic, everything should have been exactly the opposite: a bomber flies (sometimes far and at night) behind the front line, and its fate may not always be installed; fighters in June 41 fought (if they fought) in the sky over their own airfields, over cities and railway stations not yet occupied by the enemy. How to explain the fact that there were more fighter planes "missing in action" than those shot down in air combat and anti-aircraft guns combined?

The strange "case" that hit fighter planes is also striking: 40% of brand new, recently from the MiGs factory and 23% of not old at all (production peaked in 1940, when two-thirds of the total number were produced) "seagulls" irrevocably broke/crashed within nine days. At the same time, non-combat losses of bombers amounted to less than one tenth of

initial quantity. This is strange: "MiGs", "Seagulls" and "SB" were made in one city (Moscow) of one country; served technicians of quite equal qualifications - and at the same time such a different percentage of technical failures? The strangest thing is the ratio of losses of missing aircraft and pilots. In July,

40 aircraft were classified as "did not return from a combat mission". Thus, in total for June - July, 182 aircraft did not return from the mission for an unknown reason. But the pilots who "did not return from a combat mission" for the same period (40 days of June-July) turned out to be only 97 people. How can this be? In the fever and turmoil of the first days of the war, a bomber could take to the air without a navigator, without a gunner - but not without a pilot! Or the pilot returned from a mission, but could not remember where his plane had gone? Yes, this could have happened in a war (severe injury, shell shock, memory loss), but not in the same

quantities...

## Chapter

### 26 HOW IT WAS - 3

The most dramatic events took place, as is known, in the Western OVO. Recall

once again the composition of the Soviet aviation group. In the first echelon, in the strip 50-100 km from the border, the 11th SAD (Grodno-Lida), the 9th SAD (Bialystok), the 10th SAD (Brest-Kobrin) were deployed. In the deep rear of the district, approximately on the Vitebsk-Bobruisk meridian, the 12th BAD, the 43rd IAD, and the 13th BAD were deployed (from north to south). Under the operational control of the district was the 3rd DBAK, whose two bomber divisions (52nd and 42nd) were even further east, in the

Smolensk region. The logic of such a construction is obvious. In the first echelon, as part of the 11th, 9th, 10th SAD, the main forces of the fighter aviation of the district were concentrated (8 fighter regiments, including all units armed with MiGs and Yaks). This grouping covered the territory of the district from the passage of enemy aircraft, and also ensured the operations of its own strike aircraft against objects in the adjacent territory to the maximum possible (limited by the radius of action of fighter aircraft) depth. On the contrary, the main forces of bomber aviation were pulled back 400-450 km from the border, which, more reliably than any air defense, protected them from a sudden air strike and made it absolutely impossible to attack enemy ground forces on airfields. The 43rd IAD (4 fighter regiments) was an operational reserve of the front command, and also provided air cover for the most important industrial facilities and transport hubs in eastern Belarus. The enemy concentrated in the offensive zone of the Army Group "Center" the largest and best armed aviation grouping:

the 2nd Air Force of the Luftwaffe (8th and 2nd air corps), which included 8 groups of "horizontal" bombers, 7 groups of dive bombers "Ju-87", 10 groups of fighters and 4 groups of multipurpose twin-engine "Me-110".

In terms of the number of strike aircraft, the 2nd Air Fleet outnumbered the other two (1st and 4th), taken together; the actual superiority was even higher given the presence in service of a large group of dive bombers and attack aircraft (which include the Me-110). The

offensive zone of the Army Group Center (i.e., the Western OVO and the southern flank of the Baltic OVO) was the only theater of operations in the air over which Soviet aviation had a very modest numerical superiority: fighter pilots 1.42 to 1; for bomber crews - 1.14 to 1. In the previous chapters, we have already considered how ineffective the Soviet Air Force acted even in those areas where they had multiple numerical superiority; one should not be surprised that in a situation of approximate equality of forces, armed confrontation led to the rapid defeat of the air forces of the Western Front. Next, we will try to recreate the real picture of those tragic events.

#### 9th GARDEN

In a vast forest area southwest of Bialystok, the 9th SAD was based - one of the best (according to the results of pre-war inspections), the largest (five air regiments, more than 420 combat aircraft), which received the largest number of the latest MiGs (237 units) division of the Soviet Air Force. The command of such a division was entrusted to the Hero of the Soviet Union, a veteran of the war in Spain, Major General S.A. Chernykh. The four fighter regiments of the division were almost completely equipped with MiGs, but at the same time, the fighters of the "old types" ("I-16" and "I-153") had not yet been removed from the units, so 366 fighter aircraft ended up in the 9th SAD. At the same time, new MiGs continued to arrive in Bialystok. As of June 1, there were 237 of them, (23) but the report of the Commander of the Air Force of the Front gives the figure 262. (10) Already by June 1, 1941, 225 pilots of this division were considered prepared for the combat use of MiGs; taking into account the huge number of speculations on this subject, we will also give the exact archival details (TsAMO, f.35, op. 107559, d. the compilers of the collection "Air Forces of the Great Patriotic War in numbers" refer. (23)



The bomber regiment of the division (13th BAP) was one of the first in the Soviet Air Force to begin re-equipping with dive bombers - first the Ar-2, and then the Pe-2 (of which there were 8 units in the regiment by the beginning of the war). Such a division was deployed at the very tip of the "Bialystok ledge", which was actually "surrounded" by German troops stationed on the territory of occupied Poland on both sides; a suicidal decision (if it was planned to repel an enemy attack) and quite typical - if we finally admit the obvious facts ...

At the disposal of the command of the 9th SAD were 4 main (Bialystok, Belsk, Zabłudov, Ros) and 21 operational (field) airfields. These figures have been known at least since 1971, after the monograph by A.G. Fedorov. (41) The myth that the airfields of the 9th SAD were almost next to the border pillars, that they were subjected to artillery and even mortar fire, and "by noon German tanks crawled onto the airfield" (58) **was** invented retroactively and with a very specific goal - to find at least some "good reason" for the defeat that occurred in the first two days of the war.

The base airfields of the division were located at a distance of 40 km (Belsk) to 170 km (Ros) from the border. Of the number of operational airfields, only 4 (out of 21) are mentioned in all sources known to the author, namely: Seburichin (50 km), Wysokie Mazowieck (45 km), Dolubovo (22 km) and Tarnovo (12 km). Thus, among the 25 airfields, one is found that, at least theoretically, could be subjected to shelling on the first day of the war. As for the "German tanks", the routes of movement of units of Guderian's 2nd Panzer Group have long been known for certain - the nearest tanks "crawled" 100-150 km south of the 9th SAD base area.

It is almost impossible to restore the real picture of events from the documents: the 9th SAD simply disappeared. In the Central Archive of the Moscow Region, the archives of the 9th SAD have been declassified and are now available to everyone. This is a yellowed cardboard folder with many blue seals and stamps on the cover. Inside the folder is a piece of paper the size of a box of Kazbek cigarettes. The leaflet says that on 06/25/41 the division was disbanded, and the staff documents were not preserved. Memoir literature will not help us much either.

There was no one to write memoirs. The commander of the Air Force of the Western Front, Major General I. Kopets, died on June 22 under circumstances unknown to this day. Major General A. Tayursky, who temporarily performed his duties, was arrested on July 8, 1941 and shot. The commander of the 9th SAD was arrested on July 8, shot on October 16, 1941. He was rehabilitated posthumously in August 1958.

Fragments of various testimonies, documents, journal articles and books, conscientiously collected 15 years ago in work (58), suggest that two regiments of the 9th SAD (124th IAP and 126th IAP) carried out in the early morning of June 22 (from 4 until 9 a.m.) several air battles, during which 8 enemy aircraft were shot down and 3–4 of our own were lost. Losses, as we see, are minimal (less than 2.5% of the original number). It is difficult to judge the reliability of the victories, nevertheless, among the 47 aircraft of the 2nd Air Force of the Luftwaffe shot down and damaged on June 22, there could well have been shot down by these regiments. There are no mentions of military operations, victories and losses in the air of the 41st IAP (63 pilots, 56 MiG-3s and 22 I-16s) in the popular literature. The reports of the military

counterintelligence agencies published in 2008 by M. Meltyukhov turned out to be somewhat more informative. (151) So, in the special message of the 3rd Directorate of the NPO No. 37928 dated July 15, 1941, we read:

An investigation into the reasons for the destruction of all materiel by fascist aviation in the 41st and 124th IAP of the 9th mixed air division established:

The commander of the 41st Aviation Regiment, Major Ershov, at the time of the enemy aircraft raid on the morning of June 22, was confused and could not organize the personnel of the regiment to repulse the enemy. Despite the fact that during the first raid of fascist aircraft on the Siburchin airfield, where the 41st IAP was stationed, **the enemy did not disable a single combat aircraft, since all of them were dispersed and camouflaged (*hereinafter, it is emphasized by me.* - M.S. ),** Ershov did not take independent actions to deliver a decisive blow [on] enemy aircraft, waiting for instructions from the command of the 9th AD.

Major Ershov, having a combat regiment at his disposal, instead of deciding to act in formations, sent 1-2 aircraft towards the enemy, which were destroyed by the enemy. Thus, the best pilots of the regiment were killed: Solokha, Aksenov, Chernyavsky - and Krutoverets, Korobkov, Kukushkin and Kiselev were shot down.

Ershov, **having no need to relocate** from the Siburchin airfield, since this airfield had everything for combat, decided to transfer the regiment to the Kuryany airfield, and then on the evening of June 22 he moved to the Kvartera airfield. Subsequently, all the materiel was destroyed due to the fact that the aircraft at these airfields did not have air to refuel the aircraft (***i.e., compressed air to start the engine on the MiG-3***) and cartridges for the VS machine gun, proving to be incapacitated ...

Here, for the first (but by no means the last!) time, we meet with a clearly recorded "fighter redeployment" - when, after several flights from one airfield to another, the planes finally end up where they have nothing to refuel, start, arm, no one to serve, etc. With all this, it should be noted that on the morning of June 22, the aircraft in Major Ershov's regiment were "dispersed and camouflaged", the regiment did not suffer a single loss from the enemy's first strike on the airfield; losses in the air - for all the tragedy of the death of pilots - were relatively small (7 out of a total of 78 aircraft were disabled). In the report of the "specialists" there is no clear answer to the main

question - who made the decision on the suicidal relocation of the regiment? A confused commander who was waiting for instructions from above, or is it the command of the 9th SAD? Finally, the lack of cartridges for the large-caliber "BS" (one such machine gun was on the "MiGs" and on the "I-16" type 29) did not make these aircraft completely unarmed (each had two more 7.62-mm "ShKAS" ) and even more so - did not prevent take-off and further relocation to a fully equipped airfield; it was possible to start the engines with a standard autostarter, which was supposed to be at a large airfield in Quatera ...

However, let's continue reading the document:

... The commander of the 124th IAP, Major Polunin, was on vacation at the time of hostilities and arrived at the regiment only on the afternoon of June 22, when the enemy had already made two raids on the airfield. After the third raid by enemy aircraft, Polunin **flew away on a UTI-4 aircraft without giving any instructions.** The assistant commander of the

124th IAP, Captain Krugloye, remained with the regiment commander during his vacation, on June 22 in the morning, during a raid by fascist aviation, he was confused and did not take decisive measures to combat it. All Kruglov's orders were unorganized. Aircraft were launched into the air not by units, but by singles, which did not give the desired effect in repelling enemy aircraft. Most of the MiG-3 fighters **did not fire machine guns**, since the team of plant No. 1 **did not have time to adjust them.** All this led to the fact that all aircraft of the regiment were destroyed.

Here comments are already superfluous. It remains only to add that it was the 124th IAP that received the largest - not among the regiments of the 9th SAD, but in all the Red Army Air Forces - the number of "migs" (70 units), on which they "did not have time to adjust" weapons in a few months. And this is 50 km from the border with a potential enemy ... The most detailed crumbs of information are found in the description of the

fighting of the fourth fighter regiment of the division - the 129th IAP (40 pilots, 61 "MiG" and 57 "I-153").

It was this regiment that was located at the Tarnovo airfield, 12 km from the border, but it was not at all destroyed by the "artillery shelling" of the enemy. With reference to the archive fund of the 129th IAP (later to become the 5th GIAP), the authors of the monograph (94) describe the first hours of hostilities as follows:

... The appearance of enemy aircraft in the early morning did not take the 129th IAP by surprise. With the dawn one squadron

was lifted into the air, and at 04.05, during the battle with a dozen Bf 109s, the senior political instructor AM Sokolov, piloting the MiG, won the first victory. Just as successfully, a group of 18 Non-111s managed to repulse a raid on the Tarnovo airfield - the Germans failed to drop their bombs accurately.

In total, on June 22, the regiment shot down (more correctly, declared) 6 enemy aircraft, losing only two aircraft in the air. I. Girman and N. Erchenko were killed in air battles over the Tarnovo airfield, junior lieutenant A. Radugin was killed in a MiG-3 that caught fire during takeoff. And these are all the losses of the flight personnel of the defeated regiment of the disappeared division for the first day of the war.

In air battles on June 22, the 129th IAP used up 15,000 rounds of 12.7 mm caliber and 36,000 rounds of 7.62 mm caliber. (94) This is exceptionally valuable information. Firstly, it follows from it that the synchronizer on the MiG-3 can be adjusted - if there is a desire - it is possible. Secondly, comparing these figures with the standard MiG-3 ammunition load (300 rounds for the UBS machine gun and 750 rounds for two ShKASs), we conclude that the regiment conducted at least 50 sorties, during which there was an air battle with the enemy. It is possible that the information about 6 downed enemy planes has some grounds. In any case, the loss of only two aircraft in the course of fifty air battles indicates the high level of flight training of the pilots of the 129th IAP, and the quality of the MiG-3 fighter. The 129th IAP was defeated as a result of a strange "relocation", however, in the

memoirs of the regiment commissar V.P. Rulin's story looks almost like a heroic saga:

... A decision was made: to withdraw the regiment from the blow. We will fly to another airport. It is necessary to allocate a team to destroy everything that remains: bomb ammunition, shells, cartridges and fuel (***how can the regiment be able to fight "at another airfield" without all this?*** - M.S.). Berkal (***commander of the 129th IAP***) made the only possible decision in the current situation, but how hard it is to realize that it is the only one ... Everyone wanted

quickly sit at the helm of a combat vehicle and beat, beat the Nazis ... ..

Two groups of "seagulls" and "migi" flew to the Dobzhenevka airfield, located just a few kilometers from the permanent base of the regiment - the city of Zabłudov. There, in winter apartments, the families of the personnel were accommodated ... A messenger arrived from the division headquarters. He gave the regiment commander an order: all planes to fly to the Kvater airfield before dark (**this is the same airfield east of Bialystok, where - according to the reports of the "special officers" - the 41st IAP ended its combat path**). Twenty-eight cars could take to the air, and five needed repairs (**and where are the other eight dozen aircraft ???**). And German tanks and motorized infantry were already rushing to the Dobzhenevka airfield (there were no tanks or motorized infantry in those places at all, but ordinary Wehrmacht infantry occupied Bialystok on June 25). Near the airfield there was an oncoming night battle (who fought with whom on the evening of June 22 near the town of Zabłudów, i.e., 80 km from the border?) Flashes of fire approached the airfield, surrounded it with a ring. At two o'clock in the morning, the technicians reported: "All the machines are working..."

... All the planes that survived the day flew to the Kvatera airfield in the Bialystok and Grodno directions, mainly from border airfields. Five "Migs" were transferred to the Baranovichi airfield (200 km east of Bialystok), also clogged with aircraft, mainly I-16 and I-15-bis fighters ...

... It was necessary to show restraint and discipline, to retreat to the rear and save people (**yes, this was the task that any director of an orphanage faced in those days.** - M.S.). The regiment commander gave the order: the remaining (**what does this mean ???**) personnel should gather at the Balbasovo airfield (**an airfield near the city of Orsha, 550 km east of the border**), a collection point for the flight and technical personnel of the district aviation regiments based at border airfields. Without wasting time, we decided to move in the afternoon

(132)

The following can serve as an important addition to this story: "... ***Despite the loss of almost all materiel not during air battles, but on the ground, the loss of personnel also turned out to be tangible. Of the 248 flight personnel who were in line on the morning of June 22, a week later, only 170 Red Army soldiers and commanders arrived in Orel to receive new aircraft. As follows from the documents, on the first day of the war, junior lieutenant N.F. was killed in battle over the Tarnovo airfield. Erchenko, did not have time to take off from Dobzhenevka and burned down in the cockpit of the MiG, junior lieutenant A.A. Radugin, several pilots were injured from fragments of air bombs, but against most of the names in the list of losses it was indicated "lagged behind during***

***relocation.*" (94)** In the memoirs of the commander of the 43rd IAD, General Zakharov, we find another very remarkable touch to the picture of "relocation": " ... ***having landed in Baranovichi*** (we are talking about the events of the early morning of June 22. - *M.S.*), ***pilots 162- his regiment was seen by several Pe-2 and Su-2 bombers, several MiG-1, MiG-3 fighters and even Yak-1 fighters. These were crews from different aviation regiments and divisions, which in the first minutes of the war managed to take off under bombs ... "*** (55)

Simply put, some pilots of the 9th SAD (and only it had "migi") began to "relocate" in order personal initiative, without waiting for any orders, "in the first minutes of the war"! By evening, there were many more such "migratory falcons". Zakharov writes that at the Minsk airfield he found ***"aircraft of different systems, absolutely not camouflaged, everything was crammed with equipment."*** Here, past these airfields (Kvater, Baranovichi, Minsk), chock-full of combat aircraft, long columns of cars with pilots were driving, who " ***wanted to quickly sit at the helm of a combat vehicle and beat, beat the Nazis ... "***

Minsk is "only" 350 km from the front. There were also leaders of the "relocation" who were able to fly in the first hours of the war right up to Smolensk!

On the alarming military morning of June 22, 1941, single fighters of the army aviation regiments of the Western Front began to land at the airfields of our air corps. After intense air battles, many of them could no

longer land on their damaged airfields, and some were immediately redirected to alternate airfields,

including ours...

(50)

These are lines from the memoirs of Air Marshal Skripko. Before the war, his 3rd DBAK was based in the Smolensk region (600–700 km from the border of 1941). A rare fighter will fly there from Brest or Bialystok, and there was no question of making such a flight on the remnants of gasoline after a “tense air battle”! And what is most surprising is the words that on the morning of the first day of the war, someone “redirected” fighter aircraft to the deepest rear. Was there such an order? Is it possible that so much effort, so much money, so much talent, so much passion and intrigue was invested in the creation of fighter aviation only in order to start a non-stop “exit from under the blow” after the very first shots?

In addition to four fighter regiments, the 9th SAD also had one bomber regiment - the 13th BAP (45 crews, 51 SB / Ar-2 and 8 Pe-2 aircraft). This is the same air regiment in which **“from dawn to dusk, squadrons of camouflaged aircraft with suspended bombs and weapons, with crews stood ready”** (we mentioned this in previous chapters). There is in the memoirs of P.I. Tsupko (at the beginning of the war - the crew commander of the Ar-2 bomber from the 13th BAP) and very strange episodes. They are not confirmed by any other (known to the author of this book) sources. And yet, since the glorious Politizdat twice (in 1982 and 1987) published a book by P.I. Tsupko, it's not a sin for us to quote two fragments from these memoirs, emphasizing some important words: **“... On Sunday, June 22, a day off was announced in the 13th air regiment. Everyone was delighted: they didn't rest for three months!**



**of the headquarters of Captain Vlasov, the command of the air regiment, many pilots and technicians left for their families in Russia ... The entire air garrison remained in the care of the internal service, which was headed by junior lieutenant Usenko on duty for the camp collection ... "(64, p. 1**

But that's not all: **"the field airfield did not have anti-aircraft cover, because the day before, the anti-aircraft battery was removed from its position and left for exercises ... the VNOS service did not notify about the approach of German aircraft ..."**

Despite such multilateral criminal negligence, the 13th BAP suffered minimal losses from the first German air raid (according to Tsupko, the first bombs fell very early, at 03:47): "Having bombed, the Nazis flew away . **Two were killed, six fighters were wounded, two planes burned down - "SB" and "U-2".**

A few hours after the first German air raid (that is, still in the early morning of June 22), the Ar-2 crew under the command of Second Lieutenant Usenko flew out for reconnaissance in the Grodno-Avgustov region. The route of the reconnaissance flight is described in the book with the utmost precision. This allows you to estimate the flight time - at most two to three hours. Consequently, no later than noon, the Ar-2 came in for a landing at the airfield of the headquarters of the 9th SAD near Bialystok. Usenko's plane had already landed, and at that time **"soldiers in gray-green uniforms separated from the hangar and ran in an unfolded chain to the plane. On the other side of the hangar, Konstantin suddenly made out six three-engine transport "Ju-52", even further - up to a dozen "Me-110" ... Gray-green figures scurried around the planes ... "** (64, p. 29) In short, the Germans were busily

settling in the airfield, located just a few miles from the headquarters of the 10th Army of the Western Front. Bialystok Regional Directorate of the NKVD and others. It's hard to believe this - at noon on June 22, all these respected organizations seemed to be in place and did not "relocate" anywhere. Judging by the report of the head of the "special department" of the 10th Army, the regimental commissar (in this case, this is a military rank, not a position) by the name of Los, they fled late in the evening: "The panic was facilitated by the fact that on the night of June 22-23 **shamefully all the party and Soviet leadership of the Bialystok region. All employees of the NKVD and the NKGB, headed by the heads of the bodies, also fled.** (151)

However, in this case, we are not interested in the fate of the Belostok "Chekists", but in the actions of the command of the 9th SAD. Let's open once again the memoirs of V.I. Olimpiyeva: **"... At the end of the day on June 22, all aviation units received an order to immediately leave the city and go to the East ... in the late evening of June 22, a long column left Bialystok and already early Monday morning was far outside the city ... Only the military with blue buttonholes were in the cars - the remaining without aircraft (???) pilots, aviation technicians, signalmen, quartermasters ... "**

By the way. A common place in traditional descriptions of the defeat of Soviet aviation in June 1941 is bitter lamentations about the fact that "the rapid advance of the enemy ground forces forced them to leave even slightly damaged aircraft at the airfields." "You can't drag them on yourself," patriotic publicists proudly exclaim at the same time. The offer is correct. This is how it is supposed to handle extremely expensive military equipment. Carry on yourself. Open the memoirs of A. Pokryshkin - he describes in great detail how he single-handedly saved his crashed MiG-3 after a forced landing, how he towed it tens of kilometers along the roads of retreat. However, it is not necessary to make such inhuman efforts. In the 9th SAD (as in any other air division) there were thousands of people, hundreds of vehicles (**"a long column left Bialystok"**) and an unknown number of wrenches. The wing panels on the MiG-3 are attached to the center section at three points; the tail section of the fuselage is docked with the central section at four points; the engine is fixed to the motor mount with 12 bolts ... All this is unscrewed and undocked, weapons and instrumentation are removed. Most (if not all) of the "MiGs" arrived in the division in plywood boxes, by rail, and not at all by flight. The heaviest unit of the "Mig" - the AM-35A engine - weighed no more than 800 kg and, with a large margin in size, went crazy in the back of the "lorry" ... Let's return, however, to Olimpiyev's story:

... In the afternoon of June 24, we continued to move east.  
This Tuesday was actually the end of the 9th SAD. eyewitnesses

they said that the planes left after the Sunday battle were transferred to the Volkovysk airfield (***probably, we are talking about the Kvatara airfield.*** - M.S.). Not provided with air cover (***hundreds of fighters needed "air cover"?*** - M.S.), they were destroyed in the morning by German dive bombers ...

At dawn on June 25, we saw the darkened city of Orsha in the lowland (500 km from Bialystok) ... From Orsha, our cars headed for Bryansk, but by mid-July they were relocated to Novoe Selo, which is seven kilometers north of Vyazma.

Seven kilometers north of Vyazma. If the Luftwaffe fighter squadrons decided to "get out of the way" with such a spatial scope, then they would find themselves exactly halfway between Berlin and Paris ...

The memoirs of Sergeant Olimpiyev quite coincide with what is known today about the fate of General S. Chernykh. The materials of the investigation and the trial of the commander of the 9th SAD have not yet been fully declassified, but V. Zvyagintsev, based on the materials of the case on the rehabilitation of Chernykh, reports that on the evening of June 26, the divisional commander and the remnants of the personnel of his division arrived in Sescha through Orsha (a town on border of the Smolensk and Bryansk regions), that is, they ended up in the deepest rear. The commander of the 9th SAD was charged with the fact that on the night of June 26-27, during an imaginary enemy air raid on Sescha, Chernykh fled in panic to Bryansk. (170) However, he was arrested only on July 8, that is, this "flight" was by no

means immediately regarded as something out of the ordinary. Traces of this highly confusing story were found, oddly enough, in the archives of the 1st Mechanized Corps of the Leningrad Military District. The 9th SAD had nothing to do with the fighting of the 1st mechanized corps, but in the documents of the operational department of the headquarters of the corps there is a copy of the order of the people's commissar of defense (who also became the commander of the Western Front in early July) Marshal Timoshenko "On bringing the military tribunal to trial" dated 8 July 1941. It says in particu

... The commander of the 9th SAD, Major General Chernykh, as a result of a criminal attitude to his official duties, complete disregard for the situation, forbade the relocation of the materiel (**highlighted by me.** - M.S.), which contributed to the destruction of aircraft by the enemy at the airfield. In addition, being sent to the rear to form new units, Mr. Chernykh showed cowardice and alarmism there too ...

(171)

All this is very strange. S. Chernykh not only did not “forbid” the relocation of the personnel of the division, but personally led it. To what point in time (before June 22, on the morning or evening of June 22) the accusation that the commander of the 9th SAD “forbade the relocation of materiel” (if such a ban existed at all) is difficult to understand ... It is even more difficult to sum up the first day war in the 9th SAD

as a whole. There is no such arithmetic that could describe this story. Fighter regiments lost no more than 10-12 aircraft in the air. The 13th BAP lost 1 SB bomber from the first strike on the airfield. At the same time, official Soviet historiography insists that the 9th SAD lost 347 aircraft on June 22, 1941. It remains only to agree that they were all lost on earth.

#### 11th GARDEN

The fighting of the 11th SAD ended in the same way as in the 9th SAD. But here they started in a completely different way:

... The predawn sky over the Lesishche field airfield was suddenly cut by a short arc of a rocket. Anxiety! Commander of the 127th Fighter Aviation Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel A.V. Gordienko, **who checked the posts at the aircraft stands (i.e., the commander was at that pre-dawn hour not “with relatives”, but directly at the airfield.** - M.S.), immediately

went to the command post of the unit. **The operational duty officer (*and he is in this regiment in his place.* - M.S.)** reported by phone that a message had been received about the bombing of the city of Grodno by German aircraft. Having specified the cause of the alarm, Lieutenant Colonel A.V. Gordienko ordered **the duty link (*of course, there is such a link, and it is ready for immediate take-off.* - M.S.)** to fly to the attack area and find out the situation. One after another, the planes piloted by pilots Lieutenant I.E. Komarov, junior lieutenants A.N. Danilin and K.M. Treschev, at 3 o'clock. 30 min. went to reconnaissance

flight.

It should be noted that, although the regiment was formed in August 1940 from military personnel of various fighter units, by the beginning of the war it was a close-knit team capable of successfully performing combat missions. The skill of the flight crew was high. The professional pilots had an excellent command of piloting technique, meteorological conditions **day and night**, some of them **had combat experience** gained in battles with the White Finns, in the area of Khasan and                      drove cars in                      complex Khalkhin Gol. The first air battle was carried out at five o'clock in the morning by five fighters, led by the political officer of the 1st squadron, senior political officer A.S. Danilov. To the north of Grodno, at an altitude

of one and a half thousand meters, the pilots saw three twin-engine bombers on a head-on course and went on a frontal attack. Two Nazis, unable to withstand the onslaught, began to go back with a decrease, but the leading Junkers continued to fly. From the third attack A.S. Danilov destroyed it, and the flight commanders S.S. shot down the fleeing planes. Deryugin and I.F. Druzhkov. Returning from assignments lieutenants R.I. Varakin, S.Ya. Zhukovsky, senior political instructor A.A. Artemov also reported on new victories ... Soon, the pilot, senior political instructor A.S., again showed high skill. Danilov. The eight fighters led by him dispersed a group of enemy aircraft over

Grodno, and to the west of the city Danilov shot down a plane, the second one in the morning, which fell on the outskirts of the village of Krapivno ...

Returning to the patrol zone, the pilots saw that more than 40 Nazi aircraft were preparing to storm the Cherlena airfield, where the 16th SBAP was based. From the east, Soviet fighters were rapidly approaching the enemy bombers in combat formation - two squadrons of the 127th **(most likely a typo, and we are talking about another fighter regiment of the division - the 122nd IAP)** aviation regiment ... The fight lasted over 30 minutes. Up to 70 aircraft participated from both sides. The enemy had not only quantitative, but also qualitative superiority. Soviet aviators shot down 4 aircraft, but they themselves lost 5 fighters. Three pilots at different times got to their own, and two - lieutenants P.A. Kuzmin and N.N. Mikhailov - died ...

In the current situation, the command of the regiment sought **(for what? To get out of the strike as soon as possible?) To ensure the timely preparation of aircraft for repeated combat missions**, the uninterrupted supply of fuel and especially ammunition, the need for which has increased dramatically. There were many other issues that needed to be resolved quickly. And they did. Actively the political staff of the unit got involved

in the matter ... In the afternoon, a group of pilots led by Lieutenant S.Ya. Zhukovsky. Having flown out to support ground forces in the Grodno-Skidel region, they met German bombers, which, under the cover of fighters, were reorganizing for an attack. In a fleeting battle, S.Ya. Zhukovsky and junior lieutenant B.A. Fokin shot down one enemy plane each, and the third fell victim to the entire group. Having disrupted the attack, the pilots returned to their airfield without loss ... **Until late in the evening, the pilots of the 127th IAP fought against the fascist invaders, sparing no effort and life.** In unequal air battles, lieutenants A.V. Gribakin,

I.G. Markov, A.D. Petkun, A.I. Pachin, M.D. Razumtsev, M.S. Filippov and junior lieutenant P.V. Sushkin.

Despite the severity of the fighting, the pilots literally rushed into the air. Squadron commander I.N. Drozdov made **five sorties** and shot down two planes, senior political instructor A.A. Artemov took to the air **nine times** and destroyed three enemy vehicles ... The enemy searched for

almost the whole day, **but could not find our airfield (!!!)**.

The command of the regiment

attached great importance to camouflage. **Early in the morning, after the alarm**, technicians and mechanics **dispersed the materiel** and equipped aircraft stands at the edge of a large forest. These works were supervised by the communist engineer-captain V. S. Kubarev. The pilots were ordered to use **tactical methods of masking the airfield**. Returning from assignments, they approached the base at low level flight. After landing, the planes immediately took cover. During takeoff, the required altitude was not gained immediately, but after leaving the airfield area at low altitude. Only **after 19 hours the enemy discovered the airfield**, and soon about 30

Yu-87 bombers, accompanied by Me-109 fighters, flew in to attack it. **An air battle** ensued (*of course, how else should a FIGHTER air regiment react to an enemy raid?*). Despite the clear advantage, the enemy still failed to destroy our planes on the ground (*what prevented them from shooting at the firing range?*). *the planes of the 127th IAP "as if they were bombers attacked by Soviet pilots*, they did not conduct aimed fire, but hit the squares, their bombs did not reach the target ... government highly appreciated the successes The Soviet of the 127th IAP, which made **180 sorties on the first day of the war ...**

Probably, if we remove the mention of the "first day of the war" and geographical names from the text, then the Soviet reader brought up by Soviet writers will categorically not believe that we are talking about June 22, 1941. In comparison with Veselovsky's story, one gets the impression that the events are taking place in another country, in another army, on another planet...

But there was only one planet, and the 127th and 31st air regiments were located on this planet at a distance of less than 200 km. And to top it all, the 127th IAP (unlike the 31st) was armed not with the latest, fastest MiG-3 fighters in the world, and not even with honored veterans of the I-16, but with obsolete slow-moving biplanes "I-153", which many authors generally refuse to include in the list of fighter aircraft.

But - maybe all of the above is just ordinary propaganda? Publication date - 1971, the author of the article, A.P. Proskurin, served as deputy commander of the 127th IAP for political affairs ... At the present time, all this does not sound very convincing. Let's try to evaluate the information about the successes of 127 IAP according to reports "from the other side of the front." Historians R. Larintsev and A.

Valyaev-Zaitsev published (70, 131) a copy of several pages from a document with the long title "Daily reports of the 6th Department of the Service of the Quartermaster General of the Luftwaffe (files of the Military Archive of the FRG RL 2 III / 1177-1196)".

It is this document that we have repeatedly mentioned above under the title "Luftwaffe Loss Journal". As the publishers themselves note, the method of processing the reports of the commanders of the Luftwaffe units was such that many damaged and under repair aircraft fell into the loss log with a delay of several weeks or even months. Thus, this document gives, in fact, the minimum bound for estimating the number of downed and damaged aircraft.

So, Grodno is found in the entries for June 22, 1941 seven times. And every time next to the indication of the serial number of the aircraft shot down over Grodno, there are full-fledged 100%.

Shot down: one "frame" (scout FW-189), one twin-engine "Me-110" and five "109" "Messers".



And one of them - together with the commander of JG-27 Schelmann. These seven aircraft, on the one hand, cannot be firmly and accurately attributed to those shot down by the pilots of the 127th IAP - another fighter regiment fought near Grodno, the incredible events of which will be discussed below. On the other hand, the crash sites of many German planes are not specified, in many cases it is the place where the "uncontrolled collision with the ground" occurred, and not the place of the air battle. In any case, the 20 downed German aircraft declared by the pilots of the 127th regiment, most likely, do not go beyond the "normal" threefold overestimation of the number of victories. In no way trying to belittle the merits of the commander of the 127th IAP, we note, however, that Lieutenant Colonel A.V. Gordienko did not invent any "Newton's binomial", did not use any technical or tactical innovations in the battles of June 22. In the part entrusted to him, "only" the orders of higher commanders, the Charters and Instructions were carried out conscientiously and on time. Even this modest "only" turned out to be enough to inflict damage on the enemy, quite comparable to our own losses, while fighting on outdated equipment.

In addition to the 127th IAP, the 11th SAD included the 122nd IAP (50 pilots, 71 I-16s). Lieutenant S.F. began his combat path in this regiment. Dolgushin - in the future Hero of the Soviet Union, lieutenant general, head of the department of tactics at the VVIA them. N.E. Zhukovsky. The historian from Grodno V. Bardov kindly provided the author of this book with a record of his many hours of conversation with Sergei Fedorovich. These unique testimonies allow you to see the events of June 41st "from a very close distance":

... The I-16 aircraft that we received in the regiment were the 27th and 24th series, with M-62 and M-63 engines. Literally all of them were new machines, and each pilot had: 72 aircraft - 72 pilots in the regiment. Everyone has their own car, so everyone had a large flight time in hours, and the pilots' flight training was strong. I started the war with a flight time of 240 hours (!!!), and this is for 1940-1941 ... We flew almost every day, well, Sunday was a day off, and on Saturday

- they flew ... After all, the I-16, when you master it - the car was good! He caught up with the Junkers-88, and the Heinkel-111, and the Yu-87, of course, shot everything. Fighting, of course, was more difficult with the Messerschmitts, but still, due to maneuverability, you can ...

... On the evening of Saturday, June 21, 1941, we were disarmed: we were ordered to remove the guns, machine guns, ammunition and place in the quarters. I consulted with my guys, and we removed the cannons and machine guns - we were forced to. And they left the cartridge boxes ... Such a condition - it's the same as being naked ... We asked: "Who issued such an idiotic order ?!" And the regiment commander Nikolaev explained to the squadron commanders (and those, in turn, to us): "This is an order from the commander of the Belarusian military district D.G. Pavlova". The day before, he came to our airfield together with the commander of the Air Force of the district, Major General I.I. Kopets...

Somewhat later, already in the story about the events of June 22, a commission from Moscow suddenly "pops up", in front of which (and perhaps under whose pressure) the planes of the fighter aviation regiment were disarmed at the border airfield.

...Before that, we had a commission from Moscow, they flew in on the Li-2. He stood at the airfield - the Germans first of all burned him, and they left by car, their entire commission was Moscow ... It was headed by a colonel, the head of the operational department of the Air Force. There was also M.N. Yakushin, who fought in Spain. He was an Air Force inspector and was in this commission, he flew with me on a "spark" - he checked ...

What was it? The episode with the dismantling of weapons from the aircraft of the fighter regiment, which was located on the evening of June 21 at the Novy Dvor airfield, 17–20 km from the border, Dolgushin cites in a short interview published on December 18, 2001 in Krasnaya Zvezda, and in fairly detailed memoirs, placed in 2007 on

website "I remember". (172) There is no one to find out the motives for such a strange decision: I. Kopets died (shot himself?), D. Pavlov was shot (from the published materials of the investigation and the trial of the command of the Western Front, it is clear that Pavlov was knocked out of testimony about "Trotskyism" and shot in 37th year of Uborevich; the real circumstances of the defeat of the front, including the episode with the disarmament of the 122nd air regiment, were not of interest to the "investigators").

... On Sunday, June 22, at 2.2.30 a siren rang out: alarm! Well, they gathered on alarm: they grabbed suitcases, helmets, raglans. We ran to the airfield: technicians were trying out motors, and we began to carry cannons, machine guns, and ammunition. And insert the cannon into the wing - it's not wide! And insert a 20 mm cannon there - you will rip off all your hands, and there the center section is covered with duralumin, and the hatch where to stick the cannon is also duralumin. And everything is on stilettos - you will rip off all

your hands! ... I reported to the squadron commander: "The link is ready!" He called the squadron commanders. We gathered, we were sitting and suddenly we saw: from the direction of Bialystok there was a flight of planes (eight "109s"), but it was still far away when we saw them. They flew in and began to storm, but we had already sorted out the cars and dispersed them.

... The 1st squadron began to take off first, because it was next to the tents, the planes were literally 15-20 m from tents. Therefore, they were the first to prepare, and we still had to run across the airfield, and then only to get on the planes. The 1st squadron began to take off first, and when they had already taken off, other squadrons began to take off - then the raids had already stopped. That's all already — the "fight" had begun, the Germans understood... And then, they saw... The spies probably told them on the radio that the regiment had left the airfield... While I was taxiing and taking off, they hit me with 16 holes. When I took off, removed the landing gear and took off, the "Messer" "left" me - they did not deal with me, and six of them were already over the airfield. And so

this six - they absolutely did not pay attention to me, they were preparing to land on the airfield.

This piece looks very messy. It is not clear - who, where, why? What exactly did the "Germans understand"? Then everything gradually becomes clearer: **"... I walked around** (meaning I flew), **looked and went to the border, and when I walked and looked over the border, I came across a German communication aircraft from the Fiesler Storch company (a light aircraft with ultra-short takeoff and landing, such as our "U-2"). I gave one turn, and he "stuck" into the ground. Then he went to Skidel (the base airfield of the 127th IAP) - there was no one there, passed over Grodno and returned to the airfield. The squadron commander says: "We are flying away, the regiment is flying to Cherleny (an airfield near the town of Mosty on the Neman, about 75 km from the border). You let's refuel and fly there ... "The regiment flew away. I was almost the last to leave Novy Dvor..."**

At this point, we will interrupt Dolgushin's story for a while and try to understand at least something in what we have read. Yes, it's very difficult. It was much easier for decades to replicate the story about how "the Germans flew in and killed everything at the

airfields." The first thing to note is that the regiment was alerted at 2.30 in the night. Two hours BEFORE the appearance of the first "Messers". Raised on alarm, the personnel of the regiment managed to "disperse and disperse" the aircraft. They even managed (if not on all, then at least on some fighters) to put the removed weapons in place. Dolgushin evaluates the results of the first enemy raid with the words: **"There were no special losses: one car was beaten."** A more dramatic picture is drawn by the reports of the headquarters of the 3rd Army (whose operational subordination was the 11th SAD): **"... from 0430 to 0700, 4 raids were made on the Nowy Dvur airfield by groups of 13-15 aircraft. Losses: 2 aircraft burned down, 6 disabled. 2 people**

**were seriously wounded, 6 were lightly wounded ... "** (10, 137) Be that as it may, after the first enemy raids, the 122nd IAP undoubtedly survived, and the losses in the aircraft amounted to no more than 5-10% of the original number. And this is in the most unfavorable circumstances not provided for in any Charters (weapons removed from aircraft a few hours before

The main events take place after the first raid: the commander of the 122nd IAP decides to fly to the rear (however, for the time being - to the rear; however, Dolgushin claims that he saw German tanks from the air 5-10 km from the Novy Dvor airfield). It is known for certain that

there were no German tanks on the right flank of the Western Front, near the city of Grodno - the nearest to the scene of the events, the 12th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht approached Merkina at noon on June 22, i.e. was 60 km to the north. From the height of the flight, one could take "assault guns" for tanks, one or two batteries (that is, from 6 to 12 units) of which were attached to the 256th Infantry Division, which was advancing on Novy Dvor. There were other, Soviet tanks in this area - more than three hundred tanks of the 11th mechanized corps, which (according to the reports of the Soviet headquarters) " **during 22 and 23.6 they fought on the front of Konyukhi, Novy Dvor, Dombrovo.**" That, however, did not prevent the Luftwaffe fighters from starting on the morning of June 22 to develop their first airfield on the occupied Soviet territory. In general, the airfield in Novy Dvor was not deprived of the attention of historians and publicists. Thus, in the history of the combat route of the 256th Infantry Division, it is noted that "**the advanced units of the 481st Infantry Regiment reached the field airport at 12.30, 4 km north of Novy Dvor and shot 19 aircraft that were already caught at the start.**" On July 2, 1941, the Nazi officialdom, the Völkischer Beobachter newspaper, devoted an entire article to the accomplishments of the commander of the 481st regiment - albeit under the title "Brilliant Heroic Death". The article also says that "**the regiment's advanced unit stormed the field airfield of the Bolshevik Air Force and destroyed 19 aircraft in the process.**" But with the "assault" Goebbels propagandists got excited ... Now let's return to Dolgushin's story:

... I flew to Lida (80 km east of Grodno) somewhere around 11.30-12.00. Two nines also landed in front of me on this airfield, because they bombed in Cherleny - you can't sit down. And so, when our taxis were taxiing, Me-110s swooped in and, catching ours there on taxiing, they began to hit everyone who was taxiing on the airfield runway. And there were many more planes on the taxiway. As a result of this Me-110 raid, they did nothing to the vehicles, but the division commander Ganichev was wounded in

stomach, and he died 2 hours later, his deputy Colonel Mikhailov was wounded in the leg and killed one of

pilots...

... After this assault in Lida, we flew to Cherlena (**??? "you can't sit down" there?**) to the regiment, the regiment is there ... But frankly, those who had wives went to their wives, and we, bachelors, flew away. After the death of Ganichev, no one commanded the division: the division was left "without a rudder, without sails." The commander died, Mikhailov was wounded, and I didn't even know the chief of staff ... We flew in

and landed in Cherlena, where the I-153 "Seagull" fighters of the 127th regiment were in service (perhaps Dolgushin is mistaken in the name of the airfield, **because it was not the 127th IAP that was based in Cherleny, but the bomber 16th BAP.** - M.S.), armed only with ShKAS machine guns, and we have a squadron with I-16 cannons. And in Cherleny there are no shells for cannons, because our technicians traveled from Novy Dvor on their own and by that time were still on the way ... Well, we began to work on bridges in Grodno - to cover

the bridges and cover the withdrawal of our troops through bridges. It was there - above the bridges - that I shot down my first Ju-88 bomber. While we were fighting, the bridges in Grodno were intact and the troops were crossing. We saw how our troops crossed these bridges - retreated to the right bank of the river. Neman, and until the end of the day the bridges remained intact ...

... When it got dark and the night came, the command came: "Fly to Lida"! And here is your answer - to those who say that we had untrained pilots: the regiment lost 5 or 6 vehicles, and more than 60 vehicles in the regiment were still "alive"! And the pilots in the 127th regiment are the same phenomenon. They came to land, and the runway in Lida was dug up: a concrete strip was being built there, in connection with which there was a narrow landing strip, on which there was especially nowhere to sit even during the day. So, the training of the pilots was so strong that during the landing we did not break a single aircraft.

... More than a hundred cars accumulated at the airfield: our I-16s and I-153s from the 127th IAP ... We landed in Lida without technical staff, without everything. The cars are empty - the ammunition is empty, the batteries are dead, there is gasoline, but it is in tanks underground, there is nothing to get. And with canisters and buckets - try to pour 300 kg into the plane with a bucket! And not a single tanker — everything was left at the airfield, in Novy Dvor and Cherleny. The flight crew did not eat anything all day long, each made 5-6 sorties and were tired and exhausted so that neither arms nor legs could work - we could barely move our legs, and then, what a moral state - you yourself understand ...

... Early in the morning, June 23, when it was still dark, we were alerted. We ran to the airfield, and our cars had empty tanks - they couldn't take off, nothing. And "Me-110" destroyed everything that was **(or almost nothing - see below)** on earth. Two regiments were defeated and ceased to exist. We were put in cars and taken to Moscow via Minsk, for new equipment. They all left Lida together - the pilots of the 122nd and 127th regiments, got into cars and everyone left ... And I'm sure that 50% of the "live" planes of both

regiments remained there, or even more! This is how the existence of two regiments ceased ...

Along with two fighter regiments, the 11th SAD included a bomber regiment - the 16th BAP (46 crews, 24 "SB" and 37 new "Pe-2"). This regiment was defeated, defeated practically without a fight and in the very first hours of the war. In the report of the political department of the 11th SAD, sent to Minsk at 14.50 on June 22, we find a short entry: ***"at 9.50 am. 37 Yu-88 planes raided the Cherleni airfield. The planes of the "SB" regiment are on fire. Details and losses unknown..."***

In the report of the commander of the Air Force of the 3rd Army (at that time he was in the Red Army and such a strange position, in fact duplicating the duties and rights of the commander of the 11th SAD) to the commander of the Air Force of the front dated June 24, the time of the raid was shifted from 9.50 to the first minutes of the war, and

“Details and losses” are named quite categorically: **“At 4.00 on 22.6.41, the enemy attacked our airfields at the same time. The entire 16th bomber regiment was put out of action...”** ( 10, p. 139). **no air defense was**

**organized. 9 people died in the air - the link of Captain Protasov, and on the ground 6 people died and 15 people were injured. The personnel disappeared behind thick pines and largely managed to**

**be saved...”**

An even simpler and even more ugly picture is depicted in their stories by very “simple” people - not marshals and not scientists. A.B. Fedorova worked as a salesperson in the military department of the 16th BAP. In her memoirs (recorded by a historian from Grodno D. Kienko) we read:

... On May 2-3, the regiment flew to the Cherlena field airfield ... The first raid on Cherlena was made at about 4 in the morning, the second at 8 in the morning. After the second raid, there were no planes left suitable for takeoff ... The first raid was directly on the aircraft stands, and then on the tent city. By this time, they managed to leave him and hide in the forest ...

Another letter, this time from the son of a participant in the events:

I, Salnikov Georgy Georgievich, son of Salnikov Georgy Ivanovich, gunner-radio operator of the 16th SBAP. Somewhere in 1952-53, he told me, a boy, the tragic story of the beginning of the war ... I woke up from a roar and shooting **(but not from a combat alarm.** - M.S.). In front of his eyes, his commander Protasov took off and went to ram. As I understand it, he served in his squadron. Then, an hour later, German motorcyclists appeared, with whom they entered into battle, but soon German armored personnel carriers with infantry appeared, and they had to retreat.



Somewhere at 10-11 in the morning they found an abandoned "lorry", the father wiped the wet distributor and started it. On it, 20-25 people from the 16th regiment reached Lida, they had the banner of the regiment and staff documents. They were all arrested, but soon released ...

According to the author of this book, the most accurate and reliable information is contained in the story of the saleswoman: the personnel of the regiment "hid in the forest." As for the "German armored personnel carriers with infantry" (there were one such company in the Wehrmacht tank divisions, and even then not in all), there were none at all in the Mosty area; the foot infantry of the Wehrmacht appeared in those places not at 10 am on June 22, but three or four days later. Why the pilots of the 16th BAP were arrested in Lida is understandable. Why "soon released"? Most likely, because those who arrested also "brought a lorry" and quickly "relocated" in an unknown direction ... The above-mentioned historian D. Kienko

gives an unexpected explanation for the carelessness of the command and personnel of the 16th BAP, which made it possible to shoot the latest bombers ( in June of the 41st, there were not so many Pe-2s in any regiment of the Soviet Air Force) as a target at the training ground: " ... ***The regiment remained in the dark about the outbreak of hostilities until 10 in the morning. Residents of the town of Lunno, which was 2 km from the airfield, heard and saw the bombardment of the neighboring Borisovshchizna airfield*** (the 13th BAP from the 9th SAD was based there) ***as early as 4 o'clock in the morning. Two neighboring airfields were separated by some 12 km. But the Cherlena airfield is separated from the town of Lunno by the Neman River and a forested area on a hill, which, on the one hand, muffled the sounds of explosions, and on the other, hid the black smoke rising from the bombed-out parking lots of the neighboring***

***airfield ... "(173) Strongly said*** . The burning aircraft of one regiment, alas, could not be used as signal fires to alert another air regiment. There was no car, motorcycle, bicycle, or at least a children's scooter that could cover 12 km in 6 hours at two airfields. The fact that there were no means of radio communication in the Red Army is "know" by everyone, and it is practically useless to argue with this "knowledge". I will confine myself to a short reference  
- on

As of April 1, 1941, the Red Army Air Force (excluding on-board radios) included: (174) - 32 PAT

radio stations (power 1.2 kW, range from 600 to 2000 km): - 404 RAF radio stations and

11 "AK" (power 400-500 W, range up to 300 km);

- 460 radio stations "RSB" and 5 "AK" (power 50 W, range actions from 50 to 100 km).

Quite unexpectedly, another full-fledged "evidence" (that is, an eyewitness account) was found in the memoirs of N. Bogdanov, the crew commander of a long-range bomber from the 3rd DBAC. No, of course, he could not witness the defeat of the 16th BAP, but he saw - and even destroyed - the material consequences of the flight of personnel : ***district of Grodno. At the same time, the second group, which included my crew, bombed the airfield, captured by the Germans along with our equipment. It was hard to bomb our planes around the airfield, especially the SB. They were very light, maneuverable and reliable machines...*** (129)

Now let's sum up the first arithmetic results. The

127th IAP suffered on June 22, probably the biggest losses among all the fighter regiments of the Soviet Air Force. In the above document, 7 dead pilots are named by name. Aircraft could have been lost more, about 10-15. The 122nd IAP lost a maximum of 5-7 aircraft in the air. Three of our bombers were shot down in the sky over the airfield of the 16th BAP. At the same time, official Soviet historiography invariably stated that the 11th SAD lost 127 aircraft on the first day of the war. We have to admit that more than a hundred combat vehicles were lost not in the air, but on

earth.

10th GARDEN

The division under the command of Colonel N. Belov was based east of Brest, in the Kobrin-Pruzhany-Pinsk area. The division had four regiments: 123 IAP (71 pilots, 61 I-153 aircraft and 20 new Yak-1s), 33 IAP (70 pilots, 44 I-16 aircraft), 39 BAP (49 crews, 43 SB and 9 Pe-2 aircraft), 74 ShAP (70 pilots, 62 I-15bis and 8 Il-2 aircraft) On the eve of the war, this division also happened (more

precisely - could happen) a typical mysterious event. At 4 pm on June 21, at a time when the roar of thousands of engines of German troops advancing to the Bug was already audible to the naked ear, the commander of the 10th SAD received a new encryption from the district headquarters: an order on June 20 to bring the units to full combat readiness and prohibit cancel holidays! Colonel Belov writes in his memoirs that he did not even bring such an order to his subordinates, but why was this order given? The base area of the 10th SAD turned out to be right at the tip of the main blow of the most

powerful Wehrmacht grouping - the 2nd Panzer Group under the command of Guderian. The largest in number (four groups, 121 serviceable Messerschmitt) operated here, and the most combat-ready - taking into account the number of highly experienced fighter aces in its composition - the JG-51 squadron, completely re-equipped with the "Messer" of the latest modification Bf- 109F. In addition, the 1/JG-53 fighter group, also armed with Bf-109Fs, also fought in the Brest-Kobrin zone. It would seem that it was almost impossible to resist them on "seagulls" and "donkeys". Moreover, the Brest area turned out to be the only point on the map of the huge Soviet-German front where the Luftwaffe fighters had a significant numerical superiority (as of June 1, there were only 90 serviceable fighters in the 10th SAD, plus 20 "yaks", obtained in just a few days before the start of the war). However, when the longest day of the year ended, the pilots of the JG-51 squadron reported only 12 Soviet fighters shot down. (63) Pilots of I/JG-53 claim for 5 downed fighters

(four Seagulls and one I-16). Total - 17. At the same time, in the Luftwaffe casualty log for June 22, 1941, we find eight references to JG-51 squadron fighters shot down or

damaged in the Brest area: five Messers were irretrievably destroyed, three aircraft were damaged, repairable in the field. Comparing these figures, we must not forget that we are dealing with qualitatively different values: on the one hand, the number of declared victories, on the other hand, real losses recognized by the enemy himself. If we count the "applications" from the Soviet side, then Belov in his memoirs claims that the fighters of his division shot down 30 German aircraft on the first day of the war (of all types, not only fighters).

The strangest thing is different: the enemy claims only 17 downed fighters (downed, mind you, for the whole long day of June 22), but in the operational report of the headquarters of the 4th Army on June 24, signed by Colonel L.M. Sandalov, it is said: **"... the 10th mixed aviation division on 22.6.41 suffered huge losses (both fighter and assault aviation regiments were almost completely destroyed) in the first half of the day and did not take part in hostilities ..."** (10, p. 149)

How, when, under what

circumstances did this "almost complete annihilation" happen?

There is a certain

clarity only with the history of the disappearance of the 74th ShAP. The former division commander writes in his article: **"... At 4.15 the airfield of the 74th assault regiment was attacked by aviation ... 10 Messerschmitts shot planes for several minutes** (usually in the books of Soviet historians, a raid on a "defenseless airfield" lasts a couple of hours, but Belov - a military pilot, and he cannot lie like that, because he knows that the Bf-109F ammunition is enough for 50 seconds of continuous firing from machine guns and 11 seconds from the MG-151 cannon) ... As a result, all fifteen I- **15s and two Il-2s were destroyed ... The personnel left without aircraft (???) took away documents, a banner and, under the command of the chief of staff, Major Mishchenko ( and where was the regiment commander?) departed to the east ... "** (44, 143) Colonel Belov

passed away in 1972. It is no longer possible to ask him what **"all fifteen"** means if there were 62 of them all. There is no one to know where the six latest Il-2 attack aircraft have gone. A little help is needed here. "IL-2" was considered at that time a top secret weapon of the Red Army. V.B.

Emelianenko in his memoirs (48) writes how in mid-June 1941 his 4th ShAP was re-equipped with the Il-2. At first, the pilots studied the hydro- and electrical circuits of a certain mysterious "aircraft H", which they were not shown even in the picture! When the first few "silts" were brought from Voronezh, from factory No. 18, the pilots were first allowed to admire them, and then the "**military with red buttonholes**" (*that is, the NKVD officers*) covered the planes, sealed the ties of the covers and put up their own (! )

security ... If everything is clear with the 74th ShAP - in the first minutes of the war, the flight crew "departed to the east", then it is much more difficult to understand the events that took place in the 33rd IAP. There is no doubt that the Pruzhany airfield was subjected to repeated and very powerful attacks by enemy aircraft (perhaps this was due to the fact that the main axis of the offensive of Guderian's tanks passed through Pruzhany to Slonim and the Germans tried to "clear the air" as much as possible for further actions of their dive bombers ). Belov writes: **"... 20 Heinkels flew into the airfield in Pruzhany. They operated under cover of a small group of "Me-109". At that time, there was only one squadron at the airfield** (which means that only one squadron in the regiment could suffer losses. - *M.S.*). **She rose to meet and entered into an unequal battle. Soon the remaining three squadrons returned from the mission (they covered the Brest-Kobrin region, where they fought with enemy bombers) and also entered into an air battle ... The pilots scattered the German bombers, and they randomly dropped bombs, almost without causing harm. In this battle, five enemy aircraft were shot down** (the only loss in this battle that Belov writes about was the death of Lieutenant S.M. Gudimov, who rammed a German

bomber) ... **The Nazis inflicted another bombing attack on the airfield with twelve Junkers Yu-88 , soon - an assault raid by twelve Me-109s, thirty minutes later - another one. There was not a single aircraft left in the regiment capable of taking off ... I ordered the entire personnel of the 33rd IAP to concentrate on the airfield in Pinsk (150 km east of Brest) and wait for my orders. By 10 o'clock, the fighting of this regiment had actually ended.** (44, p. 143) From the further description it unequivocally follows that Belov had in mind exactly 10 o'clock in the morning, and not in the evening.

Belov's memoirs almost exactly correspond to the reports preserved in TsAMO, according to which the Pruzhany airfield was attacked at 5.30 by 15 Heinkels, then at 8.40 and 9.15 by two Bf-109 nines. The same sequence of two assault strikes by the squadron of "Messers" is described - with reference to documents compiled by punctual Germans - in an article by D. Khazanov, but this action takes place in the late evening, and not in the early morning: "... At 21.20 the fourth staff of the fighter **squadron JG51, consisting of nine Bf-109Fs under the command of Lieutenant E. Hohagen, attacked the aircraft stands of the 33rd IAP at the Pruzhany airfield, then at 21.31 and 21.38 two more Messerschmitt groups approached. Upon returning to the base, the German pilots reported the destruction of 17 Soviet aircraft on the ground ...** " (63)

So, the complete destruction of all aircraft of the regiment by successive enemy strikes by 10 o'clock in the morning (according to Belov's story) is replaced by the loss of only 17 aircraft on the ground (39% of the original number) by 10 o'clock in the evening. The habitual and so beloved by historians "at dawn on June 22" turns into late evening. This question needs further study. One thing is certain - if **"the entire personnel"** of the regiment at 10 o'clock in the morning was ordered **to "relocate to Pinsk"**, then at 21:20 there was no one at the airfield in Pruzhany, and the Germans valiantly stormed the planes left during the retreat. All the more attention deserves the fact that even in this case (the deserted airfield, the absence of any opposition), the Germans reported only 17 destroyed aircraft, while according to the version of the chief of staff of the 4th Army, Sandalov, "the fighter regiments lost almost all aircraft **and could not perform combat missions.**

From what Sandalov writes in his monograph, it follows that on June 23 the headquarters of the 10th SAD was still in Pinsk (150 km from Brest), that is, in the combat zone. However, those who continued to fight did not find any traces of the headquarters of the 10th air division and its commander on June 23 in Pinsk. **"The headquarters of the 10th SAD was evacuated, I don't know where. I am sitting in Pinsk, heading the combined group of fighters. Yesterday, 22.6.41, we conducted 8 air battles, shot down 7 bombers, 3 Me-109s, 1 reconnaissance aircraft. I myself participated in the battle near Pinsk, shot down 2, I myself was unharmed. Today, 23.6, the group made 3 sorties. I'm**

**be further ”** - such a strange report was sent to the headquarters of the Air Force of the front by Captain M.F. Savchenko, who replaced Major B.N. Surin, who died on June 22 in an air battle. (50)

The main “booty” of German fighters on June 22 was Soviet bombers from the bomber regiments of the “second echelon” of the Air Force of the Western Front, which throughout the day attacked crossings on the Bug and German airfields in the area of Siedlce and Biala Podlaska. As a result of the almost complete loss of control, both on the scale of the Air Force of the Western Front, and within the air divisions themselves, fighters (at best) defended their own airfields, and bombers flew on missions without any cover. This could not but lead to huge losses - no front-line bombers of that time, neither the German Dornier and Junkers, nor the Soviet SB and DB, had defensive weapons sufficient for effective self-defense. On the first day of the war, fighter squadron JG-51 claimed 57 bombers shot down; 16 bombers shot down in the Brest-Kobrin area were reported by the pilots of the I / JG-53 fighter group. In particular, at 9.30 in the morning near the bridge over the Bug near the village of Melnik, judging by the reports of fighters from JG-51, 16 SB

aircraft were shot down. Theoretically, these aircraft could belong to the 39th regiment of the 10th SAD. However, as can be judged from the memoirs of Colonel Belov, the hostilities of the 39th BAP ended even BEFORE the battle in the sky over the Bug: “... **From the airfield of the 39th BAP at 7 o'clock in the morning, nine under the command of Captain Shcherbakov rose ... The Germans mistook our bombers for their . Nine successfully completed the task. Approximately an hour later** (i.e., at 8–9 o'clock in the morning), **25–30 enemy bombers flew into Pinsk. But at the airfield there were only cars damaged during the first raid** (although there is not a single word in the text about this very “first raid”!). **All serviceable planes have already flown to another airfield...**” Sandalov describes the same events in a completely different way:

... At about 10 o'clock in the morning, with subsequent strikes, German aviation also defeated the bomber regiment of the 10th SAD at the airfield in Pinsk, destroying almost all

aircraft, including the new Pe-2 bombers, which were not even filled with fuel.

Only 10 SB aircraft remained in the regiment ...

**(34)**

Whom to believe? The division commander writes that, at the latest, at 9 o'clock in the morning, the regiment had already moved from Pinsk to "another airfield." The chief of staff of the army claims that at 10 in the morning almost all the aircraft of the 39th BAP at the airfield in Pinsk were destroyed. Noteworthy is the message that even the newest Pe-2s were not refueled - and this was 7 hours after the announcement of the combat alert? Another version of events is given in the report of Comrade Leonov, authorized by the "3rd Department" for the 10th SAD, dated June 27, 1941:

... As a result of absent-mindedness (***as in the text.*** - M.S.) of the command and the lack of an order to act, the aircraft materiel in the 39th SBAP was destroyed. During the last raid, the SB plane that took off shot down the enemy Yu-88 aircraft. Anti-aircraft machine guns at the airfields were inactive. The machine guns on the surviving aircraft were not activated. Between the breaks in the raids, no measures were taken to save the equipment of the aircraft ...

The entire flight crew was at the airfields, did nothing, that is, they did not go to the rear and were at a loss, as a result of the fact that there was nothing to fight with (???). At the airfields, preparations were mainly made to repulse the alleged landing of troops (???). Stocks of bombs, food, uniforms were not taken to the rear, the bombs were not dispersed. With the attack of the enemy on the air garrison of the 123rd and 33rd IAP, the reserves, apparently, will not be destroyed, since the evacuation is completely unorganized, they are running in disarray, then the main attention of these garrisons will be focused on saving the lives of families ...

**(151)**



The first day of the war was a little more successful for the bomber divisions of the "second echelon" of the Air Force of the Western Front - "ground losses" were almost zero. In the memoirs of the commander of the 13th BAD, Polynin, only one mention of German air raids is found:

... Thirty minutes later, Kalinin reported: -

The airfield was attacked by seven Junkers. Two of them were shot down by fire from the ground from turrets, two were set on fire by some of our fighter pilots who were in the air on the I-153. All four bombers fell not far from the airfield, they are burning out ... On the

first day of the war, the Germans flew three times at our airfield, but did not cause much damage. Only two cars burned down. Bombing was carried out from a great height and inaccurately ... On June 23, the Nazis began to carry out raids on our base airfields.

But the bombs they dropped, as a rule, fell on empty places. At the end of the flights, the aircraft quickly dispersed to alternate airfields and carefully camouflaged ...

(49)

And even more so, single Luftwaffe raids on airfields located in the deep operational rear of the front of the 3rd air corps of the DBA turned out to be ineffective: " ... ***On the morning of June 23, the enemy bombed our airfield. The raid was ineffective, the Nazi pilots failed to damage the runway. Our planes did not suffer either ...*** " (129) N.G. recalls this. Bogdanov, crew

commander of the DB-3f bomber from the 212th DBAP. Most likely, this is the only such episode, since the corps commander N.S. Skripko, in exceptional detail, literally by hours and minutes, describing the events of the first days of the war,

He does not mention any enemy air raids on the airfields of the 3rd DBAK. The bomber

regiments of the Air Force of the Western Front, which almost completely retained their aircraft on the ground, inflicted numerous strikes on targets on enemy territory in the first days of the war. In the final report of the commander of the Air Force of the Western Front, N.F. Naumenko from 31.12. 41 we read: **"... Parts of the Air Force of the Western Front entered the war on the morning of June 22, 1941. This day is characterized by ... the organization of retaliatory strikes on enemy airfields Sokolov, Sedlec, Lukow, Byala Podlaska, on enemy groupings in Tsekhanovets, Konstantinów, Rygali, oz. Serves, Augustow, Suwalki, for industry in Koenigsberg, Warsaw ... "** (10, p. 131)

Summing up the results of the events of the first day of the war in the sky over the Western Front, only one thing can be said with all certainty - it will never be possible to give exact numbers. The reports of German pilots are unreliable by definition, as are the reports of any fighter aircraft of any Air Force in the world. The documents of the Soviet air regiments and divisions either did not survive or were drawn up retroactively; to a large extent - according to rear rumors and with the aim of creating a personal document of justification. In such a situation, only indicative estimates are possible. Summing up all the available scraps of

information "from the Soviet side" suggests that the fighter regiments of three divisions of the first echelon of the Western Front Air Force (11th, 9th, 10th SAD) lost 30–40 aircraft in air battles. And no more

Togo.

German fighters from JG-51 reported 12 Soviet fighters shot down, III/JG-53 and I/JG-53 pilots reported 20 and 5 fighters shot down, respectively (but here we must take into account that the III/JG-53 group operated at the Western and North-Western fronts and part of the aircraft shot down by it belonged to the composition of the Air Force S-3 f.). In addition, a certain number of Soviet fighters were shot down by German bombers and in battles with Me-110 attack aircraft. In general, taking into account the minimum 2-fold overestimation of the number of declared victories, the above estimate (30–40 Western Front Air Force fighters shot down in the air) seems quite realistic (if not even overestimated).

The enemy that day irretrievably lost 15 single-engine fighters, another 8 were damaged. The number of damaged vehicles is likely to be significantly underestimated. For example, judging by the entries in the loss log, the JG-53 squadron did not have a single damaged aircraft at all (!!!), but for some reason the number of sorties in this squadron on the second day of the war dropped sharply ... In general, the results days are very sad for us, however, given the advantage of the "first strike" that the best aces of the Luftwaffe assembled in the 2nd Air Fleet had on that day, one could not count on more. In any case, the ratio of fighter losses of 1 to 2 or even 1 to 3 still does not give grounds to talk about "beating inadequate amateurs."

In comparison with the initial number of fighter aircraft, three divisions of the first echelon (11th, 9th, 10th SAD) lost about 5-6% of combat vehicles. Pilots in these divisions, as you know, were much smaller than aircraft. On the other hand, the loss of an aircraft does not always lead to the irretrievable loss of a fighter pilot. But even if we assume the worst and almost unbelievable - a pilot died in every downed fighter, then even then the loss of pilots will be less than 9% of the original number (40 out of 460). Nevertheless, three divisions were utterly defeated and already on the second or third day of the war they disappeared from the reports and operational

reports of the Soviet headquarters. It remains only to agree with the traditional version of Soviet historiography - the lightning destruction of the first echelon of aviation on the Western Front did not occur in the air, but

on the ground.

## **Chapter 27**

### **FIGHTER "REBASE"**

So we have come to the moment when it is time to explain: why the author with such persistence “breaks through the open door”, proving something that no one has ever argued with. Yes, indeed, no one denied the fact that the huge losses of aircraft did not occur at all in air battles, but mainly on the ground.

The problem is that behind the words “destroyed at the airfields” there can be a variety of events. For example, enemy bombers fall on a “peacefully sleeping” airfield. This should not have happened in military aviation units, because no military unit ever “sleeps peacefully” - in any unit there is a duty officer, orderly, guard, security, etc. Moreover, there could be nothing like this in fighter regiments of the Air Force of the western border districts, which received on June 18–21, 1941, all the necessary instructions to increase combat readiness, disperse and camouflage aircraft, etc. Moreover, almost all of them were alerted at 2–3 o’clock in the morning on June 22. If in reality everything was not at all the way it should have been, then the reason for the defeat should be recognized not as a “sudden attack by the enemy”, but as a chronic criminal negligence of the command.

Another situation - the enemy with huge forces falls on the airfield and, despite the fierce resistance of the military unit based at the airfield, destroys most of the aircraft. This happened extremely rarely in the history of the Second World War, and was accompanied by much greater losses of aircraft and pilots of the attacking side. As for June 22, 1941, the author of this book could not find a single such episode. Perhaps something similar happened at the airfields of the fighter regiments of the 10th SAD (i.e., where the most powerful forces of the Luftwaffe were concentrated in the zone of the main attack of Army Group Center). Perhaps this question still needs to be studied. In all other cases, raids by German aviation were carried out in small groups - from a link to a squadron (i.e., from 4 to 12

aircraft), and in the presence of organized resistance led to minimal, or even just single, losses of the defending side. The third possible situation

is that there are a lot of people at the airport, a lot of planes, a lot of commanders, but there is no military unit, that is, this "many people" does not act as a single entity, fastened by the Charter, order, requirements of the military Oath. On the contrary, all orders, instructions and instructions are ignored, the planes are lined up in the middle of the airfield "wing to wing", half of the personnel are "in the city with relatives", the rest, at the very first shots, "start a lorry" and leave. After that, a link of German planes from a strafing flight, slowly and diligently shoots planes abandoned on the airfield. Examples of such (or very close to it) criminal inaction, negligence and actual desertion are found, alas, in large numbers.

There is another option "destruction of aircraft on the ground." Namely: a team of the German rear service consisting of one sergeant major and two soldiers arrives at the airfield of the Soviet Air Force captured a few days (or weeks) ago. The sergeant lazily counts the abandoned planes "by tails", after which the soldiers pour gasoline from the tanks onto the ground and flick a lighter ... Can't this be called "destruction on the ground"? Moreover, if the sergeant major was from the ground services of the Luftwaffe (and it most likely was), then these aircraft can rightly be considered "destroyed by German aviation." It is extremely important to note that it was

in this interpretation of the real fact of the destruction of Soviet Air Force aircraft that both warring parties were interested! Of course, it was more profitable for the Germans - from the commander of the air regiment to Dr. Goebbels himself - to talk about the "crushing blow of the Luftwaffe" than about the rear sergeant major. Of course, the commanders of the defeated air regiments of the Western Front, who "relocated" 500 or more kilometers to the rear, did not want to admit at all that they had abandoned tens and hundreds of serviceable combat aircraft on the empty airfields. In a situation where the battlefield is left behind by the enemy and there is no practical possibility to verify the reliability of their reports and reports from a higher

there was no command, the wording "the materiel was destroyed at the airfield by successive strikes by large enemy aviation formations" became the most convenient. Of course, the Soviet "historians", who received their academic titles and positions for depicting "unparalleled in the history of mass heroism", did not check the reliability of such reports ...

However, in a certain sense, the "historians" were right. Desertion is when without an order. If there was an order, then desertion turns into a completely legal relocation. Was there an order? This is another "mystery of June 41st". In any case, the widespread mass nature of the phenomenon suggests that there was some kind of order to withdraw aviation from the combat zone.

Let us turn once again to the monograph "The Combat Operations of the Troops of the 4th Army". In this book, published in 1961 under the heading "secret", Colonel-General L.M. Sandalov (at the beginning of the war - Colonel, Chief of Staff of the 4th Army) writes with epic calmness: "***The commander of the Kobrin air defense brigade district, together with the 218th air defense division subordinate to him and the rest of the units, moved to Pinsk on June 23, and later to the rear. The commander of the 10th SAD with the headquarters and the remnants of the aviation regiments, with the permission of the front headquarters, moved on June 22 to Pinsk, and on June 24***

This is such a strange war. Not only aviation units, but also ground-based air defense are rapidly "relocated to the rear" - and at the very time when German aviation is literally rampant over the battlefield. Gomel is 500 km east of Brest. The Germans occupied the Gomel region only on August 17-19, almost two months after the start of the war. Relocation to Gomel reliably removed the remnants of the 10th SAD "from under attack" and just as guaranteed to deprive the remnants of the 4th Army of any air support. Who, then, was supposed to take this "blow"? Mobilized collective farm men with Mosin's three-ruler? And what is already completely strange, Sandalov claims that these amazing "relocations" were carried out with the sanction of the command of the Western Front!

Whether or not there was in fact an order to relocate is a question for the prosecutor. It is enough for the historian to confine himself to stating the indisputable fact that it is the hasty and

disorderly "relocation" became the main fighter aircraft of the Western Front. It was no accident

that we gave such a detailed account of S. Dolgushin's memoirs in the previous chapter. His story contains almost all the most significant moments of the so-called "relocation" and its inevitable consequences. In half a day, the regiment comes to a state of complete helplessness: there is no ammunition, the tankers are lagging behind, the batteries are dead, the flight crew **"neither arms nor legs work."** And these are completely natural and, most importantly, quite predictable consequences of "rebasings" in quotation marks. Why? Because if you imagine an aviation military unit in the form of a "pyramid", then the pilots will be a speck of dust at the top of this pyramid.

The regular strength of the aviation division is estimated in thousands of people. All these people are present in the staff of aviation units for good reason. They must refuel, load, mask, repair, guard, notify, provide meteorological reports and spare parts ... And a fighter pilot, after the monstrous physical and psychological stress of air combat, must be fed, watered and put to bed. Carrying buckets (if the tanker is really lost) 300 kg of gasoline to the plane should be others. And this is not a matter of ambition and whims, but the requirement of instructions and elementary common sense. The so-called "relocation" of the flight crew - in isolation from the technical and all other services - will inevitably lead to the loss of its combat capability. The claw is stuck - the whole bird is abyss. The first

phase of "relocation" quickly (in the case of air units of the Air Force of the Western Front - in less than two days) comes the second: the pilots "got into cars and everyone left." Or they left on foot - which, in addition to the loss of expensive aircraft, led to the loss of the most scarce pilots in a war situation ...

In almost the same way and with the same consequences, the "relocation" took place in the Air Force units of the North-Western Front. The surviving documents of the front command testify that it not only did not lead the process, but also hardly imagined the scale of the "relocation" that began spontaneously. If the reader still remembers, the first summary of the S-3 headquarters f. from 22.00 June 22 estimated

front aviation losses as 56 destroyed and 32 damaged aircraft. The next day, at 22.00 on June 23, Operational Report No. 03 called the following figures for the losses of the front's aviation: "**aircraft destroyed - 14, of which 8 in Mitava, damaged - 15.**" (9, p. 57) It would seem that the losses are minimal. But after a few days, the front command states that it no longer has aviation: "**The air forces of the front suffered heavy losses ... At this time, they are not capable of effectively supporting, covering ground troops and attacking the enemy. Crews saved 75%. Losses of the material part 80%**" (highlighted by me. - *M.S.*). It is not even clear when this report was sent: at the beginning, the time of dispatch is indicated (20:35 on June 26), but at the end of the text there is the phrase: "I ask you to transfer it **to my disposal on June 26, 1941 ...**" (9, p. 68) An even more ugly picture is drawn by the documents of the "special departments". So, in the report of the deputy head of the 3rd Directorate of the People's Commissariat of Defense F. Tutushkin dated July 8, 1941, we read : **as a result, 150 vehicles accumulated at some airfields ... The crews, left without materiel, were idle and are only now heading for materiel, which arrives extremely slowly ... "A week later, a special report of the 3rd Directorate of the NPO No. 37738 of July 14 states :**

... The remaining minimum number of fighter aircraft of the Air Force of the North-Western Front is inactive due to the lack of compressed air to start the engines. Bombers sent to destroy enemy manpower without fighter cover suffer heavy losses both in materiel and flight personnel.

The evacuation of bases and units from the front lines is unorganized, the command itself shows panic, which causes a large loss of ammunition and other types of technical supplies ... July 6 of this year. The 25th air base of the 8th air division was relocated from the town



Karamysheva; 4 platforms were submitted for the transportation of goods, however, Colonel Sh. ordered the stock of bombs and fuel to be blown up, the existing 9 aircraft to be destroyed, and ShKAS machine guns to be thrown into the wells. Which was done, and the platforms and vehicles were used to transport personal items of command (motorcycles, bicycles, padded cars) ... The 13th, 127th and 206th air bases, during a stampede, left most of the supplies on the territory occupied by

the enemy, without destroying military equipment. The commander of the 127th air base at the Grudzhai site left the enemy 5,144 air bombs (of various brands), 442,500 rifle and aircraft cartridges, and 10 ShKAS machine guns. food, clothing and

technical warehouses...

The Air Force of the front, having lost its bases, is content with the supply of ammunition, fuel and vehicles from the warehouses of the Leningrad Military District, the stocks of which, being not designed to support two fronts, cannot fully satisfy the requests of the Air Force of the North-Western Front ...

### **(151)**

Earlier, at the beginning of Chapter 24, we formulated the question: how can one explain the huge difference in the number of aircraft lost at airfields in different units and formations of the Red Army Air Force. Now we can already give an answer. The answer is extremely simple. Since the main reason for the loss of aircraft at airfields was panic "relocation", the number of aircraft lost (i.e., abandoned at empty airfields) directly depended on the pace of the Wehrmacht offensive on various sectors of the Soviet-German front. Moreover - and this is very important to note - the dependence between the rate of withdrawal of the ground units of the Red Army and the "relocation" of aviation was mutual.

Bridges, roads, crossings, warehouses, command posts, communication centers must be covered from the air during any meaningful action - be it an offensive, defense, retreat. Nevertheless, it is precisely in the conditions of a large-scale retreat, when a huge mass of troops leaves the trenches and shelters and turns into huge, many-kilometer-long "ribbons" of marching columns, that gaining and maintaining air supremacy becomes the most important task. Without its decision, marching columns will turn into a target for shooting by enemy aircraft, and the retreat will inevitably turn into a stampede. In the armies of the 20th century, aviation performs (should perform) the function of the rearguard of the retreat - it must be the last to leave the battlefield. In June 1941, everything was done exactly the opposite, and the German aviation, rampant in the sky with impunity, became (which is confirmed by thousands of testimonies) the most important tool for demoralizing the Red Army. On the other hand, the erratic withdrawal of ground units often pushed air commanders to make a decision on an urgent "relocation" ... In the Southern Front, the pace of enemy advancement in June

41st was zero (the full-scale offensive of the Romanian and German troops began there only on July 2) , accordingly, there was simply no "relocation" of the Air Force of the Southern Front in June 1941 - as a result, aviation losses turned out to be minimal. Fighter regiments of the Air Force of the front irrevocably lost no more than 1-3 aircraft each on the first day of the war. Just as modest were the achievements of the "all-destroying German aviation" in the following days. As a result, as of July 10, the Air Force of the peripheral Southern Front outnumbered the other three fronts in terms of the number of fighters (537 units) combined! (23) The fate of the 69th IAP stationed in the Odessa region is noteworthy. This regiment, under the command of the outstanding Soviet pilot and commander L.L. Shestakova, without relocating anywhere, fought for 115 days in the sky over Chisinau and Odessa. He fought on those very "hopelessly outdated" I-16 fighters, with which he entered the war. In air battles, the pilots of the 69th IAP shot down (more precisely, declared) 94 German and Romanian aircraft during this period.

In the first weeks of the war, the aviation of the Leningrad District, the Baltic and Northern Fleets did not relocate anywhere. As a result, the effectiveness of German air strikes against Soviet Air Force airfields turned out to be normal in this sector, that is, very, very low.

The example of the 13th IAP is extremely indicative. Two squadrons of this fighter regiment from the Baltic Fleet Air Force were based ... in Finland, on the Hanko Peninsula (after the first Soviet-Finnish war, a Soviet naval and air base was created there). After the start of the second Finnish war (June 25, 1941), the airfield was in the zone of action not only of aviation, but also of Finnish artillery, and was constantly fired upon. According to the "logic" with which we usually describe the defeat of the aviation of the Western Front, the 13th IAP was supposed to be destroyed in a few hours. Like, for example, the 74th ShAP from Belov's division. In fact, the 13th IAP fought on Hanko until the late autumn of 1941. In March 1942, this regiment, as one of the best in the Soviet Air Force, was renamed the 4th Guards. For more than a year and a half (until January 1943), the regiment fought quite successfully on fairly worn donkeys. Moreover, how it fought - in just one month, from March 12 to April 13, 1942, the 4th GIAP announced the destruction of 54 German aircraft, while losing only two I-16s. (25, 32)

Not as fast as the German command would have liked, the troops of the Army Group South were advancing deep into Ukraine. As a result, the "miraculous remedy" (strike on airfields) worked there with big misfires - as noted above, the aviation of the Southwestern Front lost "only" one-fifth of the original number of its aircraft on the ground in the first week of fighting. The connection between the actions (withdrawal) of ground forces and the dynamics of aviation losses in different sectors of the Southwestern Front is also quite clearly visible. By the end of June, the aviation divisions of the right (northern) flank of the front (14th SAD, 15th SAD, 16th SAD) "disappear" from reports on hostilities and destroyed enemy aircraft; then, in the first half of July, a wave of retreat of the southern flank of the front sweeps away the 63rd SAD, 64th IAD, and 44th IAD that survived in June.

The situation was worst in Western Belarus and the Baltic states, where in the first days of the war the Wehrmacht's tank divisions advanced at a rate of 50-60 km per day - it was there that the "relocation" of Soviet aviation took place with the greatest scope and the most serious consequences. And the farther away from the day and hour of the "surprise attack", the greater the "losses" become, that is, the number of aircraft found by the Germans on the deserted airfields of the Western and Northwestern fronts. At 13:30 on June

22, 1941, Colonel-General Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the German Land Forces, records in his diary: **"Our air force destroyed 800 enemy aircraft."** By the end of the day, these figures hardly change: **"The Luftwaffe command reported that 850 enemy aircraft have been destroyed today."** But three days later, on the evening of June 24, Halder writes in his diary: **"The enemy aircraft, which suffered very heavy losses (approximately 2,000 aircraft), completely relocated to the rear."** (12) And this is just the beginning of the process. A few days later, the number of Soviet

aircraft destroyed on June 22, 1941 is estimated by the Germans at 1811 (instead of 850), and 1489 of them are considered "destroyed on the ground." The achievements of the 2nd Air Force of the Luftwaffe grow five times by June 28 (1570 against 300 in the reports of the first day). The losses of aviation of the North-Western Front during the first three days of the war "grow" in German reports by 15 times (1500 against 100), and 1100 of them are considered "destroyed on the ground." However, what do you want from the enemy's official (largely propaganda) reports, if such a wild-sounding term in the military lexicon as "unaccounted for loss" appeared in the documents of the Soviet Air Force. According to a report signed by Lieutenant General Zhuravlev, Chief of the Operational Directorate of the Red Army Air Force Headquarters, on August 1, 1941, this "unaccounted for" amounted to 5240 aircraft! (175) In hindsight, the huge mass of abandoned equipment was written off as the consequences of a "sudden strike on airfields". What no one began to argue with - neither German pilots (which is understandable), nor Soviet "historians" (which is even clearer) ...

## Chapter

# 28 Air Supremacy

In June 1941, the war did not end. On the contrary, it has only just begun. No matter how heavy the losses of the first days were, Soviet aviation did not disappear from the sky of the war. Moreover, she still greatly outnumbered her opponent (see Appendix 4). There is nothing to be surprised

here. Firstly, the Soviet aviation on the flanks of the war did not suffer any significant losses (the air forces of the Odessa and Leningrad districts, the air forces of the Black Sea and Baltic fleets). Despite heavy losses, the initially huge air force grouping of the Southwestern Front (Kyiv District) still outnumbered the enemy many times over. Despite heavy losses in the air, long-range bomber aviation retained most of the aircraft and crews ("airfield losses" in it were practically zero).

Secondly, the Soviet Union - unlike Germany - fought on one front (Japan, being theoretically an ally of Hitler, did not take a single step to the Soviet borders, which allowed the Red Army command to transfer significant forces from the Far East to the West). For 9 days of June, four air divisions (three mixed and one fighter) were transferred to the front. In total, from June 22 to August 1, 1941, 15 air divisions from the internal military districts, from the Transcaucasus and the Far East were transferred to the Air Force of the active fronts. (3, 27, 30) 15 air divisions - this is at least 3 thousand aircraft and crews, i.e., a grouping that significantly outnumbers all Luftwaffe formations on the Eastern Front.

Last and most importantly, even in the zone of the Western and Northwestern fronts, a crushing blow to airfields (and an even more crushing "relocation") only led to a huge loss of aircraft - but not pilots. The main component of military aviation - trained and trained flight crews - was preserved. The attentive reader should have noticed in the previous chapter two

figures underlined in the text (***“75% of crews saved, 80% of materiel lost”***). As for the “materiel losses”, they were replenished quite quickly. Thus, the Air Force of the Western Front received 709 aircraft between June 25 and July 16. (23) This figure is little known even to specialists, therefore we will indicate the exact archival reference: TsAMO, f.35, op.3802, d.19, l. 70–76. In other words, the losses of the Air Force of the Western Front from the “sudden strike on airfields” (based on the generally accepted figures of 550-600 aircraft) were completely replenished after 20 days and even blocked (!) by deliveries of new equipment. Further more. With the

outbreak of hostilities, the aircraft factories of the Soviet Union switched from the pre-war forced to the military super-forced mode of operation. At the same time, the vast expanses of the country better and more reliably than any air defense protected the Soviet aviation and aircraft engine industry from air strikes. In the second half of 1941, the volume of aircraft production not only did not decrease, but even increased - despite all the chaos of the retreat, the collapse of the transport system and the evacuation of a number of important factories that had begun. Already in July-September 1941, the aviation industry plants gave the front 4517 combat aircraft. (3) In total, in the second half of 1941, 8444 combat aircraft were produced, including 5229 fighters (2211 MiG-3, 2141 LaGG-3, 877 Yak-1). In parentheses, we note that Germany, for which “all of Europe worked”, for the whole of 1941, for both of its half-years, produced only 2850 fighters. Of course, all the above figures cannot be considered absolutely accurate, in different sources they are given with a spread of 10–15%, and some time passes between the acceptance of the aircraft by the military representative and its actual transfer to the combat unit, which further increases the discrepancy in the figures. In any case, the “excessive” losses of the first weeks of the war were replenished by the autumn of 1941. As for Germany,

in 1941 its aviation industry could not provide a simple replacement for losses. Allies capable of supplying hundreds of combat aircraft, and then thousands, Hitler did not find. As a result, never again did the Luftwaffe grouping on the Eastern Front have as many aircraft as it had on June 22, 1941.

of the year. By the beginning of September 41, as part of three air fleets (1st, 2nd and 4th), there were only 1005 vehicles in service (less than half of the total strength of the group on June 22). Yes, not every day the situation was so bleak for the Luftwaffe command as in early September, after fierce summer battles, but the average figures also indicate an increase in losses not replenished by the supply of new equipment. Thus, the average monthly number of fighters decreased in the autumn of 1941 from the initial 850 to 650-700; the average monthly number of twin-engine (bombers) decreased by the winter of 1941 from 900 to 750 units.

In the summer of 1941, Germany and its Air Force fought on numerous fronts from the English Channel to the Dnieper, from North Africa to Northern Norway. Another "front" was sea communications, the struggle on which required the presence of large aviation forces in the sky over the Atlantic. In such a situation, the Luftwaffe command not only did not have the opportunity to increase the composition of its grouping in the East, but even found itself forced to transfer fighter groups from the Eastern to the Mediterranean front. By December 1941, 6 of the 22 Luftwaffe fighter groups that were in the East on June 22 were already fighting in the skies over Malta and North Africa (II, III / JG 27, I, II, III / JG 53, II / JG 3)

The numerical superiority continued to remain with the Soviet side. Alas, it did not at all turn into air supremacy of the Soviet Air Force. A detailed and reliable "debriefing" will require the writing of several more equally thick books. Nevertheless, some idea of the "efficiency" of the available forces of the Soviet fighter aviation can be obtained by comparison. Comparison of the losses suffered by German aviation during the May (1940) battles in the skies of France, with the losses of the Luftwaffe on the Eastern Front in the summer of 1941. As noted above, the first day of the "triumphal march" (May

10, 1940) was the day of the largest losses of the Luftwaffe during the Second World War - 304 aircraft were irretrievably lost, the loss of flight crews amounted to 607 people killed and missing, 133 wounded. True, in this

a huge figure included 157 transport Junkers, shot down and crashed on the first day of the war during the airborne landing in Holland. For the purposes of our study, it will be correct to take into account the losses of "combat aircraft" in the narrowest sense of the term, that is, only bombers and fighters of all types. These losses on May 10, 1940 amounted to 111 vehicles (7 fighters, 9 dive bombers, 95 twin-engine bombers). (21) Irrecoverable losses of Luftwaffe combat aircraft on June 22, 1941 amounted to 62 units (see Appendix 6). In total, during the campaign in the West (May

10 - June 24, 1940), 976 combat aircraft were irretrievably lost, including 250 single-engine fighters. For a comparable period of time (from June 22 to July 31, 1941), the irretrievable losses of German aviation on the Eastern Front amounted to 583 combat aircraft, including 189 single-engine fighters. During the first three weeks of the war on the Western Front (from May 10 to May

31, 1940), the irretrievable losses of Luftwaffe combat aircraft amounted to 642 vehicles. The author does not have data for the same period of time. If we arithmetically add up the losses of June and half of the losses of July, it turns out that on the Eastern Front the Germans irretrievably lost 398 combat aircraft.

As you can see, the losses of the Luftwaffe on the Western Front in any of the considered time intervals were higher than on the Eastern. We note right away that in relation to the Eastern Front, we did not take into account the non-combat losses of Luftwaffe aircraft (accidents and catastrophes), which in the summer of 1941 made up a very significant (15-25%) share of losses. But even with this reservation, the picture does not change qualitatively - the losses on the Western Front were higher, only not 1.6 times, but somewhere around 1.35. In other words, French and British fighters (650-700 pilots in total) inflicted more losses on the enemy than 3.5 thousand "Stalin's falcons". And this despite the fact that the tactical and technical characteristics of the Allied fighters were no better than those of the Soviet Air Force aircraft (this was discussed a lot and in detail above). There is no need to talk about the presence of serious combat experience among French or British pilots, while a significant part of Soviet fighters by June 1941 had already gone through the "school" of fighting in Spain, China, Khalkhin Gol and Finland.



By the way, about Finland. The results of the air battles between the Soviet and Finnish Air Forces deserve at least a brief mention. Starting from June 25 and until the end of the year (actually, the active phase of hostilities ended in the measured numbers of December), Finnish fighters announced 307 downed Soviet aircraft. These are claimed victories. What happened in reality? The works of Russian historians will not help us much in answering this question, since Soviet historiography did not know and did not recognize any "2nd Soviet-Finnish War". There was "Finland's participation in Hitler's aggression against the USSR", respectively, and a separate account of losses on the Finnish front was never kept. The classic collection "Secrecy Removed" ed. Krivosheeva (35) gives a certain number of losses (64 aircraft) in the "defensive operation in Karelia", however, the chronological scope of this operation is limited to October 10, 1941, and this "operation" does not include the fighting on August 41st on the Karelian Isthmus (that Soviet historiography has always "dissolved" in the general context of the "Leningrad defensive operation"). On the other hand, it is known for certain that Finnish fighters were distinguished by their increased modesty in applications for air victories. So, at the very beginning of the war, from June 25 to June 30, 1941, they reported 34 Soviet bombers shot down - while the archive documents of Soviet air units indicate the loss of 22 bombers (not counting mid-air collisions and shelling by their own fighters) for 25-26 June. (142) During the summer battles of 1944, Finnish fighters and a German fighter group (actually two Staffels) claimed 566 downed Soviet aircraft. (176, p. 355) At the same time, Krivosheev's reference book admits the loss of 311 Soviet aircraft - again, over a shorter period of time.

Assuming an overestimation factor of about 2–3 times, which is quite realistic in this case, we come to the conclusion that Finnish fighters shot down at least 100–150 Soviet aircraft. At the same time, they themselves lost only 11 fighter aircraft. The ratio of the number of losses is at least 1 to 10. Particularly impressive are the results of the combat work of the LLv-24 fighter groups (133 downed Soviet aircraft were declared, their own irretrievable losses - one Brewster shot down by anti-aircraft fire) and LLv-26 (52 were declared

victories, own irretrievable losses - zero). (176, p. 269) It remains only to add to these figures that not a single Messerschmitt was in service with the Finnish Air Force in 1941 at all, and phenomenal success was achieved on a collection of fairly worn out assorted aircraft (moreover, in the specific conditions of the 41st year the possibility of obtaining spare parts and repair kits for aircraft of American, French and Dutch production was practically excluded). We also note that the Finnish pilots had no "experience of many years of war in the air", and both warring parties gained real combat experience by fighting each other ... Let us return, however, to the events on the main, German front of the war. Here we

are waiting for no less amazing facts: the losses of German aviation in the first days and weeks of the war, at the very time when - according to the traditional version of Soviet historiography - the Luftwaffe "captured absolute air supremacy", were significantly ... higher than in the following months! We emphasize once again that we are talking about the irretrievable losses of combat aircraft "from enemy influence and for unknown reasons." This approach to accounting for losses significantly "reduces the numbers" (the consequences of accidents and disasters are not included, numerous cases of combat and non-combat damage leading to temporary malfunction of aircraft are not taken into account), but to take into account the activity and effectiveness of enemy counteraction (i.e., the Soviet Air Force) it seems to be the most appropriate. So, on June 22, 1941, the Luftwaffe lost (in the above sense of the word "loss") 62 aircraft. 62

planes in one day. In total, 213 aircraft were lost during the period from 22 to 30 June inclusive, i.e. 24 aircraft per day. For the whole of July 41, 370 aircraft were lost, that is, 12 aircraft per day. The average monthly losses in July were half that of June. Further - less. In August, 198 aircraft were lost, that is, less than 7 aircraft per day. The overall result of German losses on the Eastern Front in 1941 was as follows: (145, 146) - 382 fighters (including 32 on the ground); - 638 bombers; - 161 Ju-87 dive bombers; - 132 multi-purpose "Me-110";

- a total of 1313 combat aircraft, including 62 aircraft, destroyed by the enemy at the airfields. As

you can see, the average daily losses were at the level of 7 aircraft per day, that is, 3.5 times lower than in June 1941. Yes, in that same "black June" of 1941 ("Soviet aviation destroyed at airfields", "endless rows of crows with spider swastikas" and so on ...). It is worth noting the indisputable fact that the re-equipment

of Soviet fighter aviation with aircraft of "new types" took place in the second half of 1941 at breakneck speed. For the simplest reason - most of the fleet of I-16 and I-153 fighters accumulated in the prewar years (about 1.5 thousand) was lost at the airfields of the Baltic states, Belarus and Western Ukraine in the first two weeks of the war. "Donkeys" and "seagulls" survived only on the flanks of a huge front (in the air forces of the Leningrad and Odessa districts and as part of the air force fleets). The structure of losses of Soviet fighter planes (see Appendix 10) clearly shows that, minus the losses of the first weeks of the war, the main share of losses (and, consequently, combat activity) falls on "new types" fighters. However, no increase in losses to the enemy, which was now opposed not by "donkeys", but by "MiGs", was observed.

The reason why German aviation suffered significant losses in the first days and weeks of the war is simple and obvious. The Soviet Union was preparing for war, preparing for many years, with the maximum exertion of the forces of a huge country, bridled by the most cruel totalitarian regime. A serious result was achieved - weighty, rough, visible. German aviation could not help but crash, flying into the "wall" of hundreds of air regiments and many thousands of aircraft. It was enough for each of the 340 fighter squadrons of the Soviet Air Force deployed to the western theater of war to shoot down three German aircraft - and the total amount of irretrievable losses of the Luftwaffe would have been almost half of the initial number of combat aircraft. But in addition to fighters, there were also air gunners of bombers. They also shot down enemy aircraft, and shot down quite actively. A typical example: among all the regiments of the Air Force of the Southwestern Front, in fourth place in terms of

The number of enemy aircraft shot down turned out to be not one of the fighter, but the 94th bomber (!!!) air regiment (the air gunners of the SB bombers of this regiment announced 23 German aircraft shot down by July 10, 1941). (161)

The first two weeks of the war were the only period in which the weekly deadweight losses of Luftwaffe aircraft on the Eastern Front were in the triple digits. In the future, total losses (from all causes) will stabilize at the level of 50-60 downed and 30-40 damaged aircraft per week. Yes, against the background of astronomical numbers of lost (in every sense of the word) aircraft of the Soviet Air Force, enemy losses will seem miserable. But this is a deceptive appearance. By the beginning of September 1941, the total number of irretrievable losses (1350 aircraft according to the most minimal estimates) exceeded half of the initial strength of the grouping. By the beginning of December 1941, the total irretrievable losses (including non-combat) amounted to 2090 aircraft, i.e., almost equal to the original number. (166)

The reality of the heavy losses of the Luftwaffe is also confirmed by the data on the losses of individual units and formations. So, in June 41, the KG-51 bomber squadron irretrievably lost 30 Junkers of the latest modification Ju-88 A4. By the end of July, the elite fighter squadron of Mölders (JG-51) irretrievably lost 40 aircraft in air battles, that is, one third of the original number. On August 30, 1941, one serviceable Messerschmitt remained in service in the III / JG3 fighter group. By September 2, repair teams repaired 10 damaged vehicles, and in this composition, the III / JG3 group, under the command of one of the best aces of the Luftwaffe V. Oesau, covered the visit of Hitler and Mussolini to Uman. There was no easy walk - neither the Wehrmacht nor the Luftwaffe. In the sky of the war there

was a fierce struggle, during which the Germans suffered very, very tangible losses.

On the other hand, Soviet aviation suffered disproportionately large, gigantic losses. Even without taking into account the strange "losses at the airfields", the combat losses of Soviet aviation were many times higher than the losses of the enemy (hereinafter, all figures are given according to the collection "WWII Air Force in Figures").

Thus, fighter aircraft lost 1380 aircraft shot down in air battles, and 350 - shot down by anti-aircraft artillery fire. Total: 1730 fighters, irretrievably lost "from the influence of the enemy." This is already five times more than the losses of enemy fighters in the air (see above). However, these two categories (shot down in air combat, shot down by anti-aircraft guns) did not exhaust the combat losses of the Soviet Air Force. Another 1,400 fighter aircraft are listed under the column "did not return from a combat mission." Taking into account these aircraft, the ratio of combat losses of Soviet and German fighters reaches 9 to 1. We remind you once again that these are losses in the air, without taking into account the losses of aircraft

at airfields! The losses are huge. Achievements (in comparison with losses) are more than modest. There is hardly another such aspect in the entire history of the war in which the assessments of the participants in the events from the Soviet and German sides coincide as much as the assessments of the "effectiveness of actions" of Soviet fighter aviation in 1941 coincide. The phrase - "German aviation bombs with impunity, our fighters are not visible" - is repeated a thousand times in reports, reports, and operational reports. When the commanders of the Red Army write this, one can still assume. deliberate "exaggeration", the desire to find "good reasons" for the defeat of the units entrusted to them. But after all, the German pilots and their commanders write literally the same thing. What reason does it have for them to underestimate the resistance of the

enemy they have defeated? Luftwaffe General W. Schwabedissen (commander of the anti-aircraft artillery corps at the beginning of the war) wrote a book based on the reports of the command and the memoirs of Luftwaffe officers, devoted to the analysis of the actions of Soviet aviation in 1941-1945. (19) There, in particular, such evidence of direct participants in the events is given:

... in 60 sorties until September 9, 1941, our unit met with Soviet fighters only 10 times ... when Soviet pilots tried to attack, they opened fire from another 500 meters and tried to dive away as soon as the bomber opened fire back

***(Major Cossart, Bomber Squadron Leader)***

... several times I myself almost collided with Russian fighters, flying through their system, and they did not even open fire

***(lieutenant colonel X. Reisen, commander  
bomber group II / KG-30)***

... until the fall of 1941, we either did not encounter Soviet fighters, or they simply did not attack us

***(Major J. Jodike, bomber squadron commander)***

... from June 22 to August 10, 1941, I made about 100 sorties and only 5 times met with Soviet fighters, but in none of these cases did a serious battle occur

***(Captain Pabst, commander of the dive squadron)***

... until the end of 1941, I flew 21 times for strategic reconnaissance in the deep rear of the Russians and only once met Soviet fighters

***(Major Schlage)***

Schwabedissen formulates his own conclusion as follows: ***"All reports from the commanders of German bomber units indicate that in 1941 Soviet fighters did not pose a threat to German bombers and often avoided combat with them."*** He also quotes a certain report from the command of the JG-54 fighter squadron, which stated:

Fights between fighters were rare... Russians  
the pilots tried to avoid the battle and leave immediately ...

The very first downed aircraft led to confusion. In such cases,  
most Soviet pilots were helpless in air combat, and German pilots  
easily shot them down ...

One should not think that the "beaten Hitler generals" simply conspired  
to denigrate everything Soviet. Not at all. The Soviet anti-aircraft artillery made  
a strong impression on them, and they do not hide it. V. Schwabedissen writes  
in his study: ***"The anti-aircraft gunners quickly recovered from the first  
shock and turned into a very strong enemy ... The German commanders  
were surprised by the effectiveness of enemy anti-aircraft artillery ..."***  
Major Cossart, mentioned above, admits that ***"anti-aircraft units acted very  
successfully against formations of German aircraft ... Usually the very  
first volleys of heavy anti-aircraft guns fell to the desired height, often  
the very first shells exploded in the center of the formation of German  
aircraft ... The reasons for the death of German aircraft were primarily  
anti-aircraft artillery fire, then infantry weapons fire, and only lastly -  
fighter attacks ... "*** ( 19, pp. 49–50)

Of course, the last remark (about the low efficiency of Soviet fighters)  
reflects only the personal experience of one of the Luftwaffe commanders.  
And although many other similar statements can be found, we will no longer  
quote the memoirs of the enemy, but will quote in full - without abbreviations  
and additions - one order of the Supreme Commander of the Red Army. At  
one time, this order was ordered to be brought to the attention of all pilots  
against receipt. I think that everyone who is interested in the history of that  
war should familiarize himself with it:

<b><i>Order No. 0685</i></b>
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September 9, 1942, Moscow

On the establishment of the concept of sortie for fighters

Facts on the Kalinin, Western, Stalingrad, South-Eastern and other fronts have established that our fighter aviation, as a rule, operates very poorly and very often does not fulfill its combat missions. Our fighters not only do not engage in combat with enemy fighters, but avoid attacking bombers. When carrying out the task of covering attack aircraft and bombers, our fighters, even with a quantitative superiority over enemy fighters, evade battle, walk to the side and allow our bomber attack aircraft to be shot down with impunity. By order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 0299, monetary rewards and government awards for combat sorties with the performance of a combat mission are provided for flight personnel as an incentive. This order in the aviation units is perverted at the fronts. Any flight on the battlefield is incorrectly considered a sortie, regardless of whether or not the fighters have completed the combat mission assigned to them. Such an

And

incorrect concept of a sortie does not educate our fighters in the spirit of an active attack on enemy aircraft and makes it possible for individual dodgers and cowards to receive rewards and government awards on a par with honest and brave

monetary

pilots.

In order to eliminate such injustice and in order to encourage only honest pilots, and to identify dodgers and cowards, expel them from the ranks of our fighters and punish them, I ORDER: enemy and fought an air battle with him, and when performing the task of covering attack aircraft and

bombers, consider a sortie for fighters only such a sortie in which attack aircraft and



bombers during the performance of a combat mission did not have losses from attacks by enemy fighters.

2. Count downed aircraft for pilots

only those enemy aircraft that are confirmed by photographs or ground surveillance reports.

3. From now on, payment for sorties and submissions to the government award should be made strictly guided by paragraphs 1 and 2 of this order.

4. Fighter pilots who evade combat with an air enemy are brought to justice and transferred to penal units - to the infantry.

5. Order to announce to all fighters on receipt.

### ***People's Commissar of Defense***

#### ***I. STALIN***

This order appeared, alas, not from scratch. Its release was preceded by the work of a special commission headed by the secretary of the Central Committee, Malenkov (the conclusions of the commission were almost verbatim included in the text of the order). The commission traveled to the Stalingrad front and, in particular, investigated the circumstances of the monstrous German air raid on Stalingrad on August 23, 1942. On that day, German bombers made - practically without any opposition from Soviet aviation - more than a thousand sorties and literally wiped the northern part of the city off the face of the earth. It is believed that in one day up to 60% of the housing stock of Stalingrad was destroyed, at least 40 thousand people died in the flames of fires and under the ruins of buildings.

As for the above-mentioned order of the People's Commissar of Defense ***"for No. 0299"***, its full title was as follows: ***"On the procedure for rewarding the flight personnel of the Red Army Air Force for good combat work and on measures to combat covert desertion among military pilots."*** Without being distracted by quoting the most detailed "price list" of cash bonuses (very modest, by the way) and awards promised for "good combat work", let's move on to the last section of order No. 0299:

#### IV. Measures to combat hidden desertion among individual pilots.

The commanders and commissars of air divisions should carefully investigate all cases of forced landings with retracted landing gear and other flight accidents that disable aircraft materiel. The culprits who

landed with the landing gear retracted or committed other actions that disable the materiel without good reason should be treated as deserters and brought to trial by a military tribunal.

It can be assumed that by the time this order was issued (August 19, 1941), the high command in Moscow had already noticed that the number of disabled aircraft was rapidly overtaking the number of flight crew losses (see Appendix 8). Yes, these are exactly the proportions of losses over a long (many-month and many-year) time interval, when the combat losses of aircraft begin to be added to the wear and tear losses many times greater than them - physical and moral (i.e., obsolete aircraft are written off and replaced with new ones types, which in the era of World War II happened quite quickly). At a "short distance", within the limits of the operation, the losses of aircraft and crews should be quite comparable.

At least that's how it was in the Luftwaffe. From June 22 to June 30, 1941, the Germans irrevocably lost 574 aircrew members on the Eastern Front (not counting ground service personnel and anti-aircraft gunners), which coincides with surprising accuracy with the estimated number of crew members of aircraft shot down in June (see Appendix 6) . Similar proportions of losses are observed on the Western Front. During the May-June 1940 campaign, the Luftwaffe irretrievably lost (killed and missing) 3,022 aircrew members. (165)

The calculation based on the number of crews of irretrievably lost aircraft gives the same 3 thousand people. The French fighter aircraft lost 257 pilots killed and missing, while 250 aircraft were shot down in air battles, 123 were lost in accidents and disasters. (21)

Against this background, the situation with the loss of aircraft and crews in the Soviet Air Force looks at least strange. However, all

these "oddities" pale next to the most surprising - a huge number of aircraft missing ("did not return from a combat mission"). Losses in this category are presented in the following table 28.

**Table 28**

	1941 г.	1942 г.
Истребители	1 400 / 32	2 469 / 64
Бомбардировщики	1 582 / 39	1 049 / 72
Штурмовики	372 / 70	1 290 / 77

Note: the first figure is the number of aircraft, the second is the percentage of the total number of combat losses.

The numbers are staggering. In 1942, there were more "missing" aircraft than those shot down in air battles, shot down by anti-aircraft guns, and destroyed by the enemy at airfields, combined. For attack aircraft - three times more. How can this be? Taking into account the structure of

Soviet bomber aviation (two thirds consisted of close-range Pe-2 bombers and only one third of long-range DB-3f bombers, which, moreover, extremely rarely flew deep behind enemy lines), such proportions of losses are inexplicable even for bombers. And even more incredible they seem in relation to the Il-2 attack aircraft. "Ilys" fought directly over the battlefield, performing the tasks of fire support for ground troops. Stormtroopers could storm enemy positions only during the day, only with good visibility; "night attack" was impossible in principle. With rare exceptions, each Il-2 was visible to thousands of eyes, the place and cause of its fall were also visible. Finally, finding out the specific reasons for the loss of a combat aircraft is necessary not at all for the convenience of future historians, but for improving the design, armor protection, defensive weapons, and tactics of use.

No less surprising are the numbers in the line of fighters. Half (47.4% to be exact) of all Soviet sorties

fighters is a cover for ground troops and rear facilities, that is, what happened in front of tens of thousands of people. 37% of the total number of fighter sorties was escort of their attack aircraft, i.e. the same Pe-2 and Il-2, "working" along the front line. The only situation in which a pair (link) by a fighter could disappear without a trace is "free hunting" in the operational rear of the enemy. For this type of combat activity, Soviet fighters spent only 2.7% of the total number of sorties - approximately this could be the proportion of "missing" fighters in the total number of losses. In fact, it turned out to be 10–20 times larger. What was it? The author does not know the answer to this question. In the absence of anything

better, I am ready to offer the reader a hypothesis. Namely, the vague wording "did not return from a combat mission" became a euphemism that replaced the euphemism of the 41st year, similar in "reliability", in the reports of the 42nd year ("destroyed by an enemy strike at the home airfield"). With the help of this crafty figure, they "made ends meet" in the reports, masking both the negligence of the command, and the monstrously high accident rate, and what was simply and bluntly called "hidden desertion" in the order signed by Stalin himself. The most convincing argument and benefit of the fact that a huge proportion of "missing" aircraft is not at all an immutable law of war is the dynamics of this parameter (see Appendix 9). If in 1942 the aircraft that "did not return from the mission" accounted for 70% of the total number of combat losses, then in 1944 this figure drops to 25%, and in 1945 to 23%.

Much in understanding the events of the summer of 1941 is clarified if we compare the losses of the Luftwaffe at the beginning of the war on the Eastern Front and in 1944, the year when, according to the generally accepted version of military history, "Soviet aviation won lasting air supremacy." The heaviest for the Germans were the losses of July and August 1944 (two grandiose, one of the most successful, offensive operations of the Red Army unfolded on the ground: Belorussian and Lvov-Sandomierz). The Luftwaffe irretrievably (and from all causes) then lost 647 and 520 aircraft, respectively. And this is the peak

loss level. Comparing it with the indicators of the summer of 1941, we find that the average daily deadweight losses only approached, but never reached the level (24 aircraft per day) of June 1941. In general, for the whole of 1944, the Germans irretrievably lost 13 aircraft per day; And this, mind you, counting non-combat losses, which amounted to at least 20–25% (sometimes much more, up to 40%) of the total number of irretrievable losses. With this important clarification in mind, we come to the most surprising conclusion: the average daily losses of Luftwaffe combat aircraft in 1944 were only slightly higher than the losses in 1941. This is a very strange fact. It

does not at all fit into the scheme familiar to us from school: at the beginning of the war - complete air supremacy for the Germans, at the end of the war - for the "Red Star Falcons". The reality turned out to be much more complicated. Strictly speaking, no "air supremacy" - if by these words we mean the immediate destruction of an enemy aircraft that dared to take to the air - was not achieved by either side. The 250,000 sorties that Soviet aviation was able to make in the first three months of the war, the serious numbers of combat losses of German aircraft - all this is absolutely incompatible with the traditional thesis of "unlimited air supremacy" of German aviation. In the summer and autumn of 1941, two opposing forces were present in the sky of the war. Yes, one of them acted much more effectively, the other could not even realize its numerical superiority, but neither side achieved decisive success. Could not win "air supremacy" (in the above sense of the term) and Soviet aviation. Including - and at the final stage of the war. Even when

the numerical superiority of Soviet fighters began to be expressed in double digits (which was mainly due to the efforts of the Allied bomber aircraft, the systematic raids of which forced the Luftwaffe command to transfer the greater and better part of fighter aircraft to the German air defense system).

Let us turn once again to the tedious statistics. In 1944, Luftwaffe fighters made 69,775 sorties on the Eastern Front. Irretrievable combat losses - 839 aircraft, i.e.

one downed fighter for 83 sorties. Bombers and attack aircraft completed 226,502 sorties. Irrecoverable combat losses - 1342 aircraft, i.e. one shot down for 169 sorties. (131) Even with all the reservations about the inevitable inaccuracy of these data, even when reduced by two, three times, the figures for the number of German aircraft sorties per one loss give an extremely clear picture. What kind of "air supremacy" can we talk about in a situation where an enemy aircraft was allowed dozens (or even hundreds!) of times to take to the air and attack Soviet troops? The irretrievable losses of Soviet fighters in 1944

are almost 4 times the losses of German fighters, the losses of bombers and attack aircraft are 3 times the losses of the enemy (see Appendix 9). Luftwaffe fighters, whose average number in the sky over the Eastern Front did not exceed 500 units, shot down at least 2900 Soviet aircraft. If we add to this number at least half of those who "did not return from the mission", then the total number of real (and not declared!) victories of German fighters reaches 3800. Even if we assume that every single combat loss of German aircraft is associated with the actions of Soviet fighters, then even with this obviously ridiculous assumption, it turns out that Soviet fighters shot down about 2200 enemy aircraft - half as much as their German opponents. And this is in conditions of huge numerical superiority. What kind of "air supremacy" can we talk about here? As a concrete illustration of what has been said, we will give an example of one operation at the end of 1944. According to all the

rules of science, it is called the "Petsamo-Kirkenes strategic offensive operation." We are talking about the fighting in the Arctic in the late autumn (from October 7 to October 29), 1944. Of the many others, we chose this particular operation because it took place on an isolated sector of the front, in a very short time, due to which it becomes possible to correctly account for the size of the grouping and the losses of the parties. From the Soviet side, the 7th Air Army (747 combat aircraft, including 308 fighters), as well as the Air Force of the Northern Fleet -

275 aircraft, including 160 fighters, took direct part in the operation from the Soviet side. Total 1022 combat aircraft, including 468

fighters. The grouping of the 5th Air Force of the Luftwaffe, opposing the Soviet Air Force in the Far North, had at that time 169 combat aircraft, including 66 fighters in two air groups (III/JG-5 and IV/JG-5). With such a balance of forces, the Soviet Air Force lost 142 aircraft, the enemy - 63 aircraft. (137) The most important result of the operation was that both of the Luftwaffe fighter groups mentioned above were able to retain most of the personnel and in an organized way relocate to airfields on the western coast of Norway ...

Almost the whole of this chapter turned out to be occupied with a discussion of the effectiveness (more precisely, the search for reasons for the inefficiency) of the actions of Soviet fighter aviation. But this does not mean at all that the Soviet bombers acted better. Nothing of the kind - just the volume of the chapter and the book is not infinite, and it is more difficult to find simple and specific indicators in evaluating the effectiveness of bomber aviation. Nevertheless, some episodes can and should be noted.

Chronologically, the first serious defeat was an unsuccessful attempt to destroy the oil fields of Romania. Having a large aviation group on the Black Sea theater of operations (Air Force of the Odessa District, Air Force of the Black Sea Fleet, 4th Corps of the DBA), having Crimea as an "unsinkable aircraft carrier", the Soviet Air Force inflicted only a few "pin pricks" on Constanta and Ploiesti. A single Luftwaffe fighter group was enough to force the Soviet command to abandon massive raids, from targeted bombing during the day, and then completely stop the operation, which - if the necessary forces were involved, careful organization, determination and perseverance - could put Hitler's Germany before the crisis of a strategic scale. It is impossible not to mention the story of the first bombing strike of the Soviet DBA on Berlin. In the summer of 1941, the

top military-political leadership of the USSR decided to present to the world material evidence of the existence of Soviet long-range aviation, about which so much was written and sung in the pre-war years. In pursuance of this task, under the personal leadership of the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force Zhigarev, preparations began for a raid on Berlin. Was formed

The 81st Special Purpose Air Division, which received the latest aircraft: the long-range twin-engine Er-2 and the four-engine giant TB-7. It was decided to make the first raid on the evening of August 10 from one of the Leningrad airfields. Further events developed as follows. Of the 32 Yer-2 aircraft, only 5 aircraft were involved in the first strike. Thus, from the very beginning, not a massive strike, but a "mosquito bite" was planned. Of the five aircraft, two crashed on takeoff, three took to the air, where they were attacked by Baltic Fleet Air Force fighters and fired upon by our anti-aircraft guns. It is believed that all of them nevertheless flew to Berlin and dropped several bombs on it in pitch darkness. On the way back, one bomber went missing, the second was attacked and this time shot down by Soviet non-fighters. Only one Yer-2 returned to the airfield. The fate of the eight heavy TB-7s that took part in the same raid was as follows: one crashed on takeoff due to a failure of two engines, another was shot down by our anti-aircraft guns while climbing, six possibly flew to Berlin:

returned to base only one, the remaining five crashed, presumably due to engine failures. The delight of Soviet historians in describing this event knows no bounds: ***"These strikes shocked the fascist leadership, the population of Germany and the troops at the front ... the chilling whistle of bombs and the randomly rushing beams of anti-aircraft searchlights caused a panic that seized the inhabitants of Berlin ..."*** Who knows, ***maybe*** so everything was - although it would be more plausible to assume that the inhabitants of Berlin, who by that time had already gained experience in repelling massive British bombardments, simply did not notice this mighty blow. In any case, he did not "shake the Nazi leadership" in the way that, for example, the Allied air strike on February 3, 1945, when more than a thousand "flying fortresses" dropped 2250 tons of bombs on the German capital.

Of course, such criminal negligence and disorganization, which were (in the presence of the Air Force Commander-in-Chief) shown on August 10, did not always happen. At the very least, but from August 8 (the day of the first raid on Berlin by bombers from the 1st MTAP of the Baltic Fleet Air Force) to September 5, 311 bombs with a total weight were dropped on the capital of the Reich



36 tons. They did not add fun to the inhabitants of Berlin. The most powerful (without any quotes) for all the years of the war, Soviet bomber aircraft struck not at Berlin and not at the Romanian oil fields, but at much closer Helsinki.

The first raid took place on the night of February 6-7, 1944, 728 aircraft dropped 6991 bombs on Helsinki with a total weight of 924 tons. Among other things, two FAB-5000s were dropped (one such bomb could demolish an entire block), six FAB-2000s and four FAB-1000s.

In the second raid, which took place on the night of February 16-17, 1944, "only" 408 (according to other sources - 497) aircraft took part, which dropped 4317 bombs on the city. The most powerful was the third and last raid (on the night of February 26-27), in which 929 bombers took part. 5182 bombs were dropped with a total weight of 1010 tons. A characteristic feature of this raid was the massive use of heavy and super-heavy bombs: 20 FAB-2000, 621 FAB-500, 1431 FAB-250. According to the calculations of the organizers of the operation (and according to all the reports of the crews and the command of the bomber formations), only a pile of smoking ruins remained from the capital of Finland (and the city had a very large proportion of wooden buildings). In September 1944 (after the

signing of the Armistice Agreement), representatives of the Soviet military command arrived in Helsinki, where, to their extreme amazement, they found a city full of life with minimal traces of war. Emotional impressions are fully confirmed by the now known figures and facts. Only 799 bombs fell within the city, which, as you can easily see, is only 4.8% of their total number. Where did all the rest fall, that is, 15,000 bombs? To port facilities and ships in the harbor? Maybe. But the loss (in total) of three boats and two cargo ships casts doubt on this as well... The Germans bombed in a different way. Significantly smaller (in comparison with the Soviet raids on Helsinki) forces and with an immeasurably greater

result. Above, we have already mentioned the terrible raid on August 23, 1942, when half of Stalingrad was destroyed in one day and tens of thousands of its inhabitants were killed. In June

In 1943, the Germans decided to take advantage of the relative calm at the front (there was still a month left before the Battle of Kursk) and launch a series of massive attacks on the industrial centers of the Volga region. (177, 178) The only aircraft suitable for this task was the veteran of the Spanish war, the twin-engine Heinkel He-111. At the airfields of the Oryol and Kursk regions, the Luftwaffe command concentrated 11 bomber groups from two Air Fleets, that is, almost all available Heinkels.

The first and largest (according to various authors, from 128 to 168 bombers took part in it) raid took place on June 4th. The object of the strike was the Gorky Automobile Plant (the main manufacturer of T-70 light tanks at that time). The shop of the main conveyor was completely destroyed, the water intake was destroyed, the factory thermal power plant was damaged. In the following days (more precisely, nights), from June 5 to June 21, six more raids on Gorky were made, about 500 sorties in total (that is, on average, about a hundred bombers were involved). 50 buildings, 8 electrical substations, 5900 units of technological equipment were destroyed at the automobile plant. Five months of emergency repair and restoration work, in which 35 thousand people were involved, was required so that on October 28 a report on the restoration of the plant could be sent to Stalin. Two raids (109 aircraft on the night of June 9-10, 88 on the night of

June 21) were made on Yaroslavl. A total of 937 high-explosive bombs with a total weight of 155 tons and 742 incendiary bombs were dropped. The object of the strike was the largest tire plant in the USSR. As a result, 6 out of 7 buildings of the plant were destroyed, warehouses of finished products and stocks of Lend-Lease rubber burned down. It took three months of emergency work to restore the plant.

On June 12, the first air strike was carried out on an oil refinery and an oil depot in the Saratov region. On the night of June 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 22, groups of several dozen aircraft continued to bomb the burning tanks. As a result, from 60 to 70 thousand tons of oil products were destroyed. Is it a lot? This amount of gasoline and diesel fuel for six Soviet tank armies (and exactly that many were by the end of the war) should have been enough to march in

3000 km. From Saratov to Paris ... On June 23, for forty minutes, the Germans bombed the Saratov aircraft plant No. 292 - the main manufacturer of the Yak-1 fighters (hereinafter - the Yak-3). The people's commissar of the aviation industry A. Shakhurin, in his post-war memoirs, describes the consequences of this raid as follows: ***"The water supply was disabled by the first bombs, and there was nothing to extinguish the fire that had arisen in many places ... The impression was that there was no more plant. The burnt walls of the buildings and machine tools remained, many of which were out of order ... The People's Commissariat reported its proposals - to restore the plant. There were other opinions -***

***to evacuate the workers to other plants ... "*** (98) In the end, it was decided to restore the plant on the existing site; as a result of the titanic efforts of builders, engineers and workers, by October the plant reached its production capacity in May. In total, 420 sorties of German bombers were made to Saratov, while five aircraft were reliably shot down. A little over one percent. 11 Heinkels were shot down over Gorky, which accounted for less than 2% of the total number of sorties.

For half a century, Soviet history books kept deathly silence about the June 1943 raids; the memory of them remained only in popular rumor. At the beginning of the 21st century, historians started talking about this tragic episode of the war. The unanimous opinion was expressed: "weak air defense." A completely inadequate outfit of forces and means, which did not allow us to adequately repel the raids of the Luftwaffe bombers. What is good about the 21st century in Russia - in addition to bare epithets ("weak", "completely insufficient"), you can also read the numbers. For example, the following: ***"The Gorky Air Defense Corps District and the 142nd NAD consisted of 47 fighters (of which 41 were directly on the cover of the city), 433 medium-caliber anti-aircraft guns and 82 small ones; there were 13 SON-2 gun-guided radar stations and two Pegmatit-type radars ... the sky of the Saratov Volga region was covered by 41 fighters, including 23 night lights, 192 medium-caliber and 72 small-caliber artillery guns, 90 DShK heavy machine guns. Their actions were provided by 4 gun-guided radar stations.*** (178)

After reading this, everyone can flip back a few pages of our book and re-read the paragraph about the composition of the air defense forces and means of the Ploiesti region. There is something to think about...

## Final chapter

Dear reader, our story has come to an end. Having traveled a long and sometimes tedious way, we have come to a result that is so simple, and most importantly, predictable, that I, frankly, feel a little bewildered - was it necessary to spend so many words?

The reasons for the defeat of the Soviet Air Force in the summer of 1941 turned out to be exactly the same as the reasons for the defeat of the Red Army as a whole. The armed forces of the USSR were part of a seemingly indestructible, but seriously ill society inside, aviation was only a part - albeit a very specific one - of the Armed Forces created as an instrument of an aggressive totalitarian regime. The tinsel of slogans, posters, peppy songs and reports of unprecedented victories in the socialist competition flew off under the blows of a military thunderstorm - and the truth was exposed. A very ugly truth that far from all the Soviet people, as one person, were ready to defend such a country and such a regime ... The tragedy of the 41st was prepared for a long time by our Best Friend of effective managers, and only even greater cruelty, depravity and stupidity of the Nazi regime, the gigantic size and resources of the country, as well as assistance from the mighty forces of the democratic West, made it possible, at the cost of enormous bloodshed, to regain the lost and broken months, overpower the enemy and end

the war in Berlin. As for the purely aviation-technical problems and conclusions, they can be formulated as follows:

1. The main element of the "aircraft-pilot" system is the pilot. This is true even today, in the era of on-board computers and homing missiles. This conclusion becomes all the more true in relation to combat aviation of the 1940s. 2. The combat training

of a pilot is an inseparable alloy of skill and desire. The ability to fly, shoot, bomb, find, evade - and the willingness to sacrifice one's life for the victory of one's squadron, one's army, one's country. In the Stalinist army, it was equally bad with both the first and second components of combat training. IN

As a result, the combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces (in particular, aviation) turned out to be surprisingly low: the lack of proper motivation was aggravated by the low level of flight, rifle, tactical preparation.

3. For successful combat use in the system, "an aircraft needs characteristics comparable to the pilot" performance airplane with tactical and technical characteristics of enemy aircraft. The boundaries of the range of this "comparability" are very wide. A small (10–15%) advantage (or, on the contrary, a lag) in one or another parameter is not significant and can almost always be compensated by choosing the optimal tactics.

4. The effectiveness and efficiency of the entire Air Force system is even less dependent on the performance characteristics of aircraft and is even more determined by the TACTICS of the combat use of individual elements of the system, their interaction with each other and with ground forces; the work of the communication and warning service, ground technical services, the development of the airfield base and, above all, the presence of competent leadership. Almost all of the above cannot be bought, stolen, copied. All this must be created within your country, your army. The possibility of creating all this is determined to a decisive extent by what is usually called the "human factor".

5. Stalin (by this name we will call the top military-political leadership of the USSR for brevity) at least from the mid-30s concentrated all his efforts (and all the resources of the richest country in the world) on comprehensive preparations for a future war. In particular, the goal was to create the most powerful military aviation in the world.

6. The sub-problem of creating material and technical means of warfare was solved best and most successfully. In particular, an aviation industry was created that was capable of producing combat aircraft in quantities that were not available to any European country; Numerous research and design organizations have been established. The success was due to an unprecedented concentration of material and financial resources, as well as the amazing myopia (if not venality) of Western politicians, who allowed Stalin to turn the stolen financial resources into the latest military technologies.

7. As a result, by the beginning of 1939, Stalin had a huge (many times more than any of the participants in the world war that began that year) at his disposal, the number of aircraft that, in their performance characteristics, were at least as good as the best combat aircraft in the world. 8. The

issues of creating the system itself, called "military aviation", were solved much worse. And there were many reasons for that. The systemic approach, in principle, is difficult to reconcile with the Marxist-Leninist worldview based on the absolutization of individual particulars.

The general level of education and culture of our collective "Stalin" was unacceptably low. Finally, the personnel potential was completely different: if the presence (and sometimes leadership) of "socially alien", non-party specialists, real engineers and scientists of the old Russian school was still allowed in the research institutes and design bureaus, then in the leadership of the army, aviation, military industry to By the end of the 1930s, there were no "strangers" anymore. Stalin's "nominees" were, at best, capable of very intensive, but extremely inefficient work. At worst, they were illiterate crooks, intriguers and upstarts who in a normal society would not be trusted to lead a brigade of scavengers.

9. Thus, by the beginning of World War II, a completely paradoxical situation had developed, almost indescribable in normal human language: a lot of planes, a lot of pilots, a lot of airfields, a lot of aircraft factories, a lot of aviation schools and flight schools. At the same time, there are not enough gas stations, hoses and funnels, batteries and autostarters, radio stations and telephone wires everywhere. There are the latest high-speed anti-aircraft guns, but there are no shells for them, there are unique systems for pressurizing fuel tanks with inert gas, but there is no nitrogen at the airfields, there is a huge aircraft fleet, but there are no tractors for clearing snow from airfields, there is a huge network of flight schools, but the cadets are busy with stepping and unloading of wagons, there is the largest oil production in Europe, but there is no high-octane aviation gasoline ... In short, everything is there - and the real combat capability of military aviation is negligible.

10. On the eve of the war, Stalin even more extended to aviation, the aviation industry and science the specific "Stalinist methods" of leadership, that is, administrative pressure, mass repressions, planting an atmosphere of fear, e. sycophancy and bloody intrigues. As a result, the established scientific teams were destroyed, the best specialists were physically destroyed (or permanently removed from creative work), and the natural process of updating the aircraft fleet of the Soviet Air Force on the eve of the war was slowed down for 2-3 years.

11. A few weeks and days before the start of the war with Germany, Stalin exterminated a large and probably the best part of the command staff of the Air Force. The reasons why it was precisely in the spring of 1941 that the leadership of military aviation became the next victim of another wave of mass terror could not be clarified. The consequences of this massacre - in terms of further demoralization of the Armed Forces - are obvious and do not require explanation.

12. As of June 22, 1941, even that part (about half) of Soviet aviation that was deployed on the territory of the western military districts many times exceeded enemy aviation in all quantitative parameters (the number of aircraft, crews, squadrons, home airfields). The technical condition and performance characteristics of combat aircraft were satisfactory, generally meeting the requirements of the war. In any case, the material part of the Soviet air regiments was not inferior to the aviation of the Western allies, in battles with which the Luftwaffe suffered heavy losses (France), or heavy losses and defeat (England). 13. The myth of the "surprise attack", cultivated in Soviet historiography for many years, is fictional from beginning to end. Not to mention the fact that the combat charters of aviation in force at that time

provided for the necessary system of measures to exclude the possibility of a "surprise strike" on home airfields, all western districts, all military aviation formations received the necessary orders before the start of hostilities to bring units into full combat readiness. 14. In the very first days of the war, the inability of Soviet aviation to effectively conduct air



war. A huge aircraft fleet was used with the "efficiency of a steam locomotive" - a small number of sorties, lack of coordination of actions and communication with ground forces, unsatisfactory work of the logistics system, impotence and lack of will of headquarters. In those sectors of the front (Belarus, the Baltic states), where the enemy ground forces delivered the main blow, a panic "relocation" to the rear began, which in fact was a mass desertion.

15. The inaction (in some cases, flight) of Soviet aviation allowed the enemy to bomb the battle formations of the ground forces of the Red Army almost without hindrance, which became one of the reasons for the disorderly panic retreat, which, in turn, even more pushed the aviation commanders to make a decision on an urgent "relocation". Thus, a system with "positive feedback" was formed at lightning speed, the action of which ultimately led to the fact that a significant part of the aircraft fleet of the Air Force of the Western, Northwestern (to a lesser extent Southwestern) fronts was abandoned at airfields. 16. In conditions of approximate numerical equality with the Soviet Air Force, German aviation

received a decisive advantage due to the higher training and morale of the flight personnel, due to the proven tactics of combat use and interaction with ground forces, due to the flawless operation of the communications and control system. Only the continuous build-up of forces as a result of the transfer of aviation units of the internal and Far Eastern districts, only the continuous formation of new air regiments allowed the command of the Soviet Air Force to strike back, to provide minimal air cover for ground troops.

17. The "blitzkrieg" in the air was thwarted for the same reason that the "blitzkrieg" on the ground did not take place: the Germans did not have time to "grind" more and more enemy units, did not have time to make up for the growing losses. On the other hand, as discipline, order and controllability were restored in the Soviet Air Force, as combat experience was gained by the flight and command staff, the actions of Soviet aviation became more effective. Probably, by the autumn of 1942, the air had developed

fragile balance of power. However, the resources that the Soviet Union and its aviation spent to maintain this balance were many times higher than the costs and losses of the enemy. Right up to May 1945, the Soviet Air Force remained a huge, but ineffective mechanism of war.

# Applications

# Annex No. 1

## COMPOSITION OF THE

## GROUPING AND NUMBER OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT

## SOVIET AVIATION BY STATE

## FOR JUNE 1-22, 1941

### *AIR FORCE OF THE LENINGRAD VO (NORTHERN FRONT) AND AIR FORCE OF THE NORTHERN FLEET*

	Истребители	Бомбардировщики
1-я САД, Мурманск 145-й ИАП, 147-й ИАП 10-й БАП, 137-й БАП ВВС С. флота, 72-я САП	109 / 0 21 / 0	85 / 0 11 / 0
55-я САД, Петрозаводск 153-й ИАП 72-й БАП	111 / 45	49 / 4
5-я ИАД, Выборг 7-й ИАП, 158-й ИАП, 159-й ИАП	269 / 138	-
3-я ИАД, Горелово 19-й ИАП, 44-й ИАП	137 / 2	-
39-я ИАД, Пушкин 154-й ИАП, 155-й ИАП, 156-й ИАП	111 / 0	-
54-я ИАД, Левашово 26-й ИАП, 157-й ИАП	90 / 0	-
41-я БАД, Гатчина 201-й БАП, 202-й БАП, 205БАП	-	48
2-я САД, Старая Русса 2-й БАП, 44-й БАП, 58-й БАП	-	174 / 17
ВСЕГО:	848 / 185	367 / 21

### *AIR FORCE OF THE RED SIGNED BALTIC FLEET*

	Истребители	Бомбардировщики
61-я ИАБр 5-й ИАП, 13-й ИАП		
8-я БАБр 1-й МТАП, 57-й БАП		
10-я САБр 71-й ИАП 73-й БАП		
Отд. эскадрильи 15-я, 41-я, 43-я, 44-я, 58-я, 71-я и 81-я		
<b>ВСЕГО:</b>	<b>325 / 46</b>	<b>174 / 0</b>

### ***NORTHWESTERN FRONT***

	Истребители	Бомбардировщики
4 САД, Таллин 38-й ИАП 35-й БАП, 50-й БАП, 53-й БАП	63 / 0	134 / 5
6-я САД, Рига 21-й ИАП, 148-й ИАП 31-й БАП, 40-й БАП	135 / 0	115 / 0
7-я САД, Митава 10-й ИАП 9-й БАП, 46-й БАП	59 / 23	116 / 0
8-я САД Каунас 15-й ИАП, 31-й ИАП	230 / 116	-
57-я САД, Вильнюс 42-й ИАП, 49-й ИАП 54-й БАП	168 / 0	75 / 7
<b>ВСЕГО:</b>	<b>655 / 139</b>	<b>440 / 12</b>

### ***AIR FORCE OF THE WESTERN OVO (WESTERN FRONT)***

	Истребители	Бомбардировщики
11-я САД, Лида 122-й ИАП, 127-й ИАП 16-й БАП	146 / 0	62 / 37
9-я САД, Белосток 41-й ИАП, 124-й ИАП, 126-й ИАП, 129-й ИАП 13-й БАП	370 / 237	59 / 8
10-я САД, Кобрин 33-й ИАП, 123-й ИАП 39-й БАП	125 / 20	53 / 9
12-я БАД, Витебск 6-й БАП, 43-й БАП, 128-й БАП, 209-й БАП	-	131 / 0
43-я НАД, Балбасово 160-й ИАП, 161-й ИАП, 162-й ИАП, 163-й ИАП	243 / 0	-
13-я БАД 24-й БАП, 97-й БАП, 121-й БАП, 125-й БАП, 130-й БАП	-	225 / 0
ВСЕГО:	884 / 257	530 / 54

### ***AIR FORCE OF THE Kyiv OVO (SOUTH-WESTERN FRONT)***

	Истребители	Бомбардировщики
14-я ИАД, Луцк 17-й ИАП, 46-й ИАП, 89-й ИАП	171 / 0	-
15-я САД, Львов 23-й ИАП, 28-й ИАП, 164-й ИАП	170 / 98	-
63-я САД, Самбор 20-й ИАП, 91-й ИАП, 165-й ИАП	178 / 63	-
64-я ИАД, Станислав 12-й ИАП, 149-й ИАП, 166-й ИАП, 247-й ИАП	275 / 57	-
16-я САД, Тернополь 87-й ИАП, 92-й ИАП 86-й БАП	132 / 4	46 / 9
62-я БАД, Овруч 52-й БАП, 94-й БАП, 226-й БАП, 227-й БАП	-	213 / 15
17-я САД, Проскуров 48-й БАП, 224-й БАП, 225-й БАП	-	66 / 34
19-я БАД, Белая Церковь 33-й БАП, 136-й БАП, 138-й БАП	-	142 / 10
44-я ИМ, Умань 88-й ИАП, 248-й ИАП, 249-й ИАП	136 / 0	-
36-я ИАД, Клев 2-й ИАП, 43-й ИАП	112 / 0	-
18-я ДБАД, Киев 90-й ДБАП, 93-й ДБАП	-	119 / 0
ВСЕГО:	1174 / 247	586 / 68

### ***AIR FORCE OF ODESSA IN (SOUTHERN FRONT)***

	Истребители	Бомбардировщики
20 САД, Кишинев 4-й ИАП, 55-й ИАП 45-й БАП, 211-й БАП	247 / 122	78 / 5
21 САД, Одесса 67-й ИАП, 69-й ИАП, 168-й ИАП 5-й БАП	201 / 5	61 / 25
45 САД, Кировоград 131-й ИАП 132-й БАП, 232-й БАП	72 / 5	81 / 5
отд. 146-й ИАП	77 / 57	
<b>ВСЕГО:</b>	<b>597 / 189</b>	<b>220 / 35</b>

### ***BLACK SEA FLEET AIR FORCE***

	Истребители	Бомбардировщики
62-я ИАБр 8-й ИАП, 9-й ИАП, 32-й ИАП	227 / 19	-
63-я БАБр 2-й МТАП. 40-й БАП	-	108 / 15
Отд. Эскадрильи 87-я, 94-я, 96-я. оиаэ 70-я, 78-я обаз	85 / 0	25 / 0
<b>ВСЕГО:</b>	<b>312 / 19</b>	<b>133 / 15</b>

### ***CONNECTIONS OF LONG-TERM BOMBER AVIATION ON THE WESTERN THEATER***

	«ДБ-3/ДБ-3ф»	«ТБ-3»
1-й АК, Новгород 40-я АД (53-й ДБАП, 200-й ДБАП, 7-й ТБАП)	94	68
51-я АД (7-й ДБАП, 203-й ДБАП, 204-й ДБАП)	112	-
3-й АК, Смоленск 52-я АД (98-й ДБАП, 212-й ДБАП, 3-й ТБАП)	132	52
42-я АД (96-й ДБАП, 207-й ДБАП, 1-й ТБАП)	69	41
2-й АК, Курск 35-я АД (100-й ДБАП, 219-й ДБАП, 223-й ДБАП)	125	-
48-я АД (51-й ДБАП, 220-й ДБАП, 221-й ДБАП)	127	-
4-й АК, Запорожье 22-я АД (8-й ДБАП, 11-й ДБАП, 21-й ДБАП)	196	-
50-я АД (81-й ДБАП, 231-й ДБАП, 299-й ДБАП)	149	-
ВСЕГО:	1 004	161

Total: -

4795 fighters, including 1082 MiG-3 and Yak-1; - 3454 bombers (not counting the TB-3), including 205 Pe-2s - a total of 8249 combat aircraft Note: - the total number of aircraft is indicated,

including

temporarily

faulty;

- combat-ready aircraft accounted for an average of 84-87% of the total; - through the fraction,

the number of aircraft of "new types" included in the total number (MiG-3 and Yak-1 fighters, Pe-2 bombers) is indicated; - the tables do not include seven "assault" air regiments, which were armed with about 320

obsolete I-15bis biplane fighters;

- about twenty air regiments being formed and the aircraft that were in their arsenal were not taken into account; —

reconnaissance missions are not included in the composition of the naval aviation units and the seaplanes they were armed with;

- the composition of the Air Force of the Southwestern Front is indicated according to the report of the front air force commander, other sources give more



number of

aircraft; - the 14th TBAP, which was armed with 38 TB-3s and 9 TB-7s, was not included in the 18th DBAD (Air Force of the South-

Western Front); - the total number of fighters does not include obsolete

I-15bis biplanes; - after the outbreak of hostilities, some regiments were transferred to other air divisions.

## Appendix No. 2

# NUMBER OF CREWS IN THE AIR FORCE OF THE WESTERN DISTRICTS AND DBA

	Истребители	Бомбардировщики	Всего
ВВС Ленинградского ВО	512 / 799	520 / 289	1 135
ВВС Прибалтийского ОБО	384 / 418	379 / 381	787
ВВС Западного ОБО	678 / 549	526 / 456	1 289
ВВС Киевского ОВО	919 / 895	617 / 449	1 547
ВВС Одесского ВО	392 / 401	181 / 192	699
ДБА (1-й, 3-й, 2- й, 4-й АК)	-	771 / 928	928
ИТОГО:	2885 / 3062	2994 / 2695	6 385

Note: - the

data reflected in this table are taken from the collection "Air Force of the Great Patriotic War

in Figures"; - the first number was obtained by summing the number of crews by air regiments as of June 1, 1941, while not taking into account the crews of attack and reconnaissance air regiments, as well as the crews of TBAPs armed with obsolete TB-3s;

- the number of combat-ready crews in the Air Force of the Kyiv OVO is indicated according to the report of the commander of the Air Force of the South-Western Front, while the crews of the 18th

DBAD are excluded from the total; - the number of "combat-ready crews" indicated in the summary table "Combat and strength of the Air Force of the western border military districts at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War on June 22, 1941" is indicated through a fraction;

- the column "Total" shows the number of combat-ready crews indicated in the summary table "Characteristics of the Air Force of the Western Border Military Districts (as of June 1, 1941)", not counting the crews that were "retrained or commissioned upon arrival from schools."

## Appendix 3

# COMPOSITION OF THE GROUPING AND THE NUMBER OF LUFTWAFFE COMBAT AIRCRAFT ON THE EASTERN FRONT JUNE 22, 1941

### *PART OF THE FORCES OF THE 5TH AIR FLEET, POLAR*

	Истребители	Бомбардировщики	Пикировщики	«Me-110»
1/JG 77	12 Bf-109			
5./KG 30		12 «Ju-88»		
IV(St)/LG 1			36 «Ju-87»	
ZG 76				6 «Me-110»

### *1st AIR FLEET (1st AIR CORPORATION), EAST PRUSSIA*

	Истребители	Бомбардировщики
I, II, III/JG 54	129 «Bf-109F»	
I, II, HI/KG 76		90 «Ju-88»
4., 5./JG 53	35 «Bf-109F»	
I, II, III/KG 77		91 «Ju-88»
Всего:	164	131
II, III/KG 1		59 «Ju-88»
KGr 806		30 «Ju-88»
Всего:	270	210

## ***2nd Air Force (8th and 2nd Aviation Corps), POLAND***

	Истребители	Бомбардировщики
I, III/JG53	79 «Bf-109F»	
I, 8., 9./KG2		66 «Do-17»
II/JG 52	39 «Bf-109F»	
III/KG 3		38 «Do-17»
II, III/JG 27	84 «Bf-109 E»	
I, II/KG 3		81 «Ju-88»
II (Sch)/LG 2	38 «Bf-109 E»	
I, II, III/KG 53		86 «He-111»
I, II, III, IV/JG 51	160 «Bf-109 F»	
Vсero:	271	185
Vсero:	400	346

Пикировщики «Ju-87»	Многоцелевые «Me-110»
II, III/StG 1 - 81	I, II/ZG 26 - 78
I, III/StG 2 - 77	II, III/SKG 210 - 83
I, II, III/StG 77 - 115	Stab/StG 1, 2, 77 - 18
Vсero: 273 / 184	Vсero: 179 / 138

## ***4TH AIR FLEET: 5TH AIR CORPS, SOUTHERN POLAND***

Истребители	Бомбардировщики
I, II, III/JG 3 - 109 «Bf-109 F»	I, II, III/KG 51 - 92 «Ju-88»
	I, II/KG 54 71 «Ju-88»
	I, II, III/KG 55 84 «He-111»
Всего: 109/89	247/226

#### **4TH AIR CORPS, ROMANIA**

Истребители	Бомбардировщики
II, III/JG 77 - 76 «Bf-109 E, F»	I, II, III/KG 27 - 87 «He-111»
I(J)/LG 2 - 40 «Bf-109E»	II/KG 4 - 24 «He-111»
Stab, III/JG 52 - 47 «Bf-109 F»	
Всего: 163 / 105	111 / 81

Total: 2253/1761

Fighters - 848/683 (633 Bf-109 F + 215 Bf-109 E). Bombers - 911 / 714 (526 "Ju-88" + 281 "He-11" + 104 "Do-17"). Dive-bombers ("Ju-87") - 309/220.

Multi-purpose ("Me-110") - 185/144. all aircraft of the 5th Air Fleet are listed as combat-ready.

2. Aircraft of the headquarters level are taken into account in the total number respective squadrons.

3. In those cases when the fighter group was equipped with Bf-109 aircraft of two modifications (E and F), all fighters were counted as Bf-109 F; this led to some overestimation of the total number of "Bf-109 F" in comparison with other sources.

4. As part of the headquarters units of the bomber squadrons, there were also several Me-110s (they are not included in this table).

## Appendix 4

# NUMBER OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT IN THE AIR FORCE OF THE FIVE WESTERN DISTRICT (FRONTS), JUNE-JULY 1941

	Всех типов	В т.ч. истребителей
22 июня 1941 г.	6755 / 5894	4226 / 3664
24 июня 1941 г.	4074 / 3895	2266 / 2167
30 июня 1941 г.	3343 / 2880	1759 / 1534
10 июля 1941 г.	2434 / 1824	1532 / 1194
люфтваффе на Вост. фронте, 30.06	2040 / ????	791 / ???

Note: 1. The table does not include DBA, Fleet Air Forces, reconnaissance and front-line aviation spotters. 2. The first figure - all aircraft, through the fraction - including combat-ready ones.

3. In the line "June 24", the number of aircraft of the Air Force of the Southern Front (not indicated by the compilers of the collection "Soviet Aviation in the Second World War in Figures") is taken equal to the number on June 30, which led to some

underestimation of the total figures. 4. The number of Luftwaffe aircraft is indicated as the arithmetic difference between the original number (including defective aircraft) on June 22 and irretrievable losses "from enemy action and from unknown causes" in the period June 22 to 30; the result obtained is overestimated, since non-combat losses (accidents and catastrophes) are not taken into account

## Annex 5

### **NUMBER OF FIGHTER PLANES IN THE AIR FORCE OF THE SOUTH-WESTERN FRONT, JUNE-JULY 1941**

	22.06	11.07	17.07
14-я ИАД (17, 46, 89-й ИАП)	171	26	22
15-я САД (23, 28, 164-й ИАП)	170 / 98	20 / 11	28 / 13
16-я САД (87, 92-й ИАП)	132 / 4	38 / 2	18
63-я САД (20, 91, 165-й ИАП)	178 / 63	52 / 22	22 / 6
64-я ИАД (12, 149, 166, 247-й ИАП)	275 / 57	???	42 / 7
44-я ИАД (88, 248, 249-й ИАП)	136	???	60
36-я ИАД (2, 43, 254, 255-й ИАП)	112	115	87
ИТОГО:	1 174 / 222	251 / 35	279 / 26

Note: 1.

Compiled according to the "WWII Air Force in numbers" [see. 23] and the Report of the front air force commander of August 21, 1941 [see. 148]. some figures have been clarified by other sources, in some cases the final figures have been

arithmetically averaged. 2. The first figure is the total number of aircraft (including temporarily out of order), through a fraction - including "new types" ("MiG-3",

"Yak-1"). 3. Aircraft "I-15" / "I-15bis" are not taken into account.

### **DECLARED NUMBER OF ENEMY AIRCRAFT SHOT BY SOUTH- WESTERN FRONT AIR FORCE FIGHTERS**

	22 - 30.06	1 - 6.07	7 - 12.07	Всего
14-я ИАД (17, 46, 89-й ИАП), Луцк	29	10	1	40
15-я САД (23, 28, 164-й ИАП), Львов	65	8	0	73
16-я САД(87, 92-й ИАП), Тернополь	20	2	2	24
63-я САД (20, 91, 165-й ИАП), Самбор	0	0	41	41
ВВС 12-й армии (Станислав)	0	0	74	74
36-я ИАД (2, 43, 254, 255-й ИАП), Киев	0	0	17	17
ИТОГО:	114	20	135	169

Note: 1. The

table was compiled according to the "Summary of destroyed enemy aircraft", signed by the commander of the Yu-3 Air Force f. Lieutenant General F.A. Astakhov [see item 161]. 2. By the method of elimination, it

can be established that the compilers of the Summary attributed to the "Air Force of the 12th Army" the 12th, 149th, 166th, 247th IAPs from the 64th IAD (headquarters in Stanislav, now Ivano-Frankivsk) and 88, 248, 249th IAP from the emerging 44th IAD (headquarters in Uman). 3. Judging by the documents of July 1941, the 20th and 91st IAP were

transferred during the course of hostilities from the 63rd SAD to the 17th SAD of front-line subordination (headquarters in Proskurov).

4. Bomber regiments of the Air Force of the South-West. reported 113 shot down enemy aircraft (this table does not reflect this).

5. The number of aircraft shot down by anti-aircraft artillery is not reflected in this table.



## Appendix 6

# LUFTWAFFE IRREVOCABLE LOSSES IN JUNE-JULY 1941

### ***PART OF THE FORCES OF THE 5TH AIR FLEET IN THE POLAR***

	Истребители	Бомбардиров.	«Ju-87»	«Me-110»	Всего	Из них на земле
Исходная численность	12	12	36	6	66	
Потери 22 июня	-	-	-	-	-	-
Потери с 22 по 30 июня	0	2	1	-	3	0
Потери с 1 по 31 июля	5	4	11	-	20	1
ИТОГО:	5	6	12	-	23	1

Note: losses of Bf-109 and Me-110 fighters are shown as a single sum.

### ***1st AIR FLEET***

	Истребители	Бомбардиров.	«Ju-87»	«Me-110»	Всего	Из них на земле
Исходная численность	164	270	0	0	434	
Потери 22 июня	1	2	-	-	41	-
Потери с 22 по 30 июня	5	36	-	-	41	0
Потери с 1 по 31 июля	16	39	-	-	55	3
ИТОГО:	21	75	-	-	96	3

## **2ND AIR FLEET**

	Истребители	Бомбардиров.	«Ju-87»	«Me-110»	Всего	Из них на земле
Исходная численность	400	271	273	179	1 123	
Потери 22 июня	15	3	2	5	25	?
Потери с 22 по 30 июня	34	13	19	21	87	6
Потери с 1 по 31 июля	62	43	39	39	183	8
ИТОГО:	96	56	58	60	270	14

## **4TH AIR FLEET**

	Истребители	Бомбардиров.	«Ju-87»	«Me-110»	Всего	Из них на земле
Исходная численность	272	358	0	?	630	
Потери 22 июня	3	30	-	1	34	0
Потери с 22 по 30 июня	18 / 13	66 / 59	-	1	85 / 72	0
Потери с 1 по 31 июля	49 / 27	63 / 46	-	-	112 / 73	1
ИТОГО:	67 / 40	129 / 105	-	1	197 / 145	1

Note: in the line "Losses from June 22 to June 30" through a fraction the irretrievable losses of aircraft of the 5th Air Corps are shown.

## **TOTAL LOSSES FOR ALL FLEETS**

	Истребители	Бомбардиров.	«Ju-87»	«Me-110»	Всего	Из них на земле
Исходная численность	848	911	309	185	2 253	
Потери 22 июня	19	35	2	6	62	?
Потери с 22 по 30 июня	57	115	19	22	213	6
Потери с 1 по 31 июля	132	149	50	39	370	13
ИТОГО:	189	264	69	61	583	19
%% от исходн. числен.	22%	29%	22%	33%	26%	0,8%

Note: - the tables take into account irretrievable (60% damage) losses of combat aircraft "from enemy impact and for unknown reasons";

- according to other sources, in June 1941, 13 German aircraft were irretrievably lost at the airfields.

The classification of losses adopted by the Luftwaffe: up to 24% - small and medium damage that can be eliminated by ground services; 25-39% - major repairs are required in parts; 40-44% - replacement of individual units or systems is required; 45-59% - multiple damage requiring replacement many units of the aircraft; 60-80% - not recoverable, some units can be used as spare parts; 81-99% - completely destroyed, debris fell on German-controlled territory; 100% - went missing, fell on enemy territory or at sea.

**Annex 7**  
**DECLARED BY THE COMMAND**  
**OF SOVIET UNITS AND FORMATIONS**  
**AIR FORCE NUMBER OF ENEMY**  
**PLANES SHOT DOWN AND REAL**  
**LUFTWAFFE LOSSES**

№	Фронт, дата	Заявлено	Факт	к (отношение заявленного к факту)
1	ВВС Зап. ф. 22.06	143	25	5,7
2	ВВС Зап. ф. 22- 30.06	422	81	5,2
3	ВВС Зап. ф. 01- 31.07	538	183	2,9
4	ВВС Ю-3 ф. 22- 30.06	164	72	2,3
5	ВВС Ю-3 ф. 01.07-10.08	470	111	4,2
6	Уничтожили на земле, ВВС Зап. ф. 22.06-17.07	205	14	14,6
7	Уничтожили на земле, ВВС Ю-3 ф. 1.07-10.08	172	1	-
8	ВВС всех фронтов, 22.06- 10.07	752	326	2,3
9	Уничтожили на земле ВВС всех фронтов, 22.06- 10.07	348	19	18,3
10	Уничтожили на земле ВВС всех фронтов, 11- 18.10	500	10	50,0
11	Боевые потери противника с 22.06 по 31.12.1941 г.	4 200	1 363	3,1
12	Боевые потери противника с 1.01 по 31.12.1942 г.	11 500	3 600	3,2
13	Боевые потерн противника с 1.01 по 31.12.1944 г.	17 500	2 900	6,03

Note: - as

"real losses of the Luftwaffe" in this table, irretrievable (60% damage) losses of combat aircraft from "enemy impact and for unknown reasons" are taken into account; damaged aircraft are not taken into account in any way; - losses of German

allied aircraft (Finnish and Romanian Air Forces), as well as losses of tactical aviation aircraft (ambulance, communications, short-range reconnaissance and spotters) are not taken into account;

- in those cases (p. 12 and 13), when the sources indicate only the total number of irretrievable losses, the losses "from the influence of the enemy" were obtained by calculation, as 65% of the total number of irretrievable losses; - p. 5 does not take into account the Yu-3 f. declared

by the headquarters of the Air Force. enemy aircraft destroyed on the ground; as the actual number of losses, the losses of the 4th Air Fleet of the Luftwaffe for July are taken, thus, the number of actual losses is overestimated by taking into account the aircraft of the 4th Air Corps shot down in the zone of the Southern Front;

- on page 8, the number of Luftwaffe aircraft actually shot down calculated as the sum of June losses and one-third of July losses;

- p. 10 shows the actual losses of the Luftwaffe for the whole of October; - in pages 11, 12, 13,

the number of declared victories is taken from the statistical collection "Soviet Aviation in the Second World War in Figures"; in many open printed publications of the Soviet era, significantly larger numbers were mentioned; - p. 13 indicates the maximum number of actual irretrievable combat losses of

the Luftwaffe known to the author; other sources give figures of the order of 2600 aircraft (fighters, bombers, attack aircraft and reconnaissance aircraft).

German losses in armament are no less heavy: in more than 3 months of the war, the Germans lost more than 21,000 tanks, 13,000 guns, 9,000 aircraft shot down by our aircraft in air battles and destroyed at airfields, not counting aircraft lost during takeoff and landing. These are the facts.

***A.S. SHCHERBAKOV***

***Head of the Soviet Information Bureau***

***The 4th of October***

In this regard, it would not be superfluous to recall that in only five months of hostilities on the Eastern Front, the Nazi army lost up to 19,000 guns, more than 15,000 tanks and about 13,000 aircraft. This does not include

huge losses in equipment and weapons of the Nazi army, which she suffered from November 16 to December 10 on the outskirts of Moscow.

***December 16***

## Annex 8

# NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT BOMBERS AND CREWS IN THE AIR FORCE OF THE SOUTH- WESTERN FRONT, JUNE - JULY 1941

	22.06	17.07
52-й БАП «СБ», «Пе-2»	36 / 36 / 59	3 / 1 / 22
94-й БАП «СБ»	63 / 59 / 46	12 / 5 / 31
226-й БАП «Су-2»	55 / 32 / 31	12 / 4 / 55
227-й БАП «Су-2»	59 / 42 / 63	23 / 10 / 51
90-й ДБАП «ДБ-3ф»	60 / 53 / 54	23 / 6 / 37
93-й ДБАП «ДБ-3ф»	58 / 55 / 55	15 / 6 / 20
33-й БАЛ «СБ», «Ар-2», «Пе-2»	60 / 53 / 63	15 / 10 / 36
136-й БАП «СБ», «Як-2/4»	53 / 50 / 36	7 / 4 / 12
138-й БАП «СБ»	27 / 27 / 37	3 / 1 / 17
48-й БАП «СБ», «Пе-2»	42 / 42 / 56	4 / 1 / 33
ИТОГО:	513 / 449 / 500	117 / 48 / 314
%%	100 / 100 / 100	23 / 11 / 63

Note: 1.

Number of aircraft / including serviceable ones / number of crews. 2.

There is no information about the 86th BAP and the 14th TBAP in the report of the Air Force Headquarters of the Southwestern Front dated 07/17/41, respectively, these regiments

are not taken into account in the table. 3. The emerging 224, 225, 242, 243, 244, 245th bomber regiments.



## Annex 9

# COMBAT LOSSES OF FRONT-LINE AVIATION BY WAR YEARS

	1941 г.	1942 г.	1943 г.	1944 г.	1945 г.	Всего
Бомбардировщики	4 029	1 462	940	751	591	7 773
Штурмовики	533	1 676	3 515	3 344	1 691	17 467
Истребители	4 416	3 888	4 642	3 330	1 191	17 467
Прочие типы	255	1 233	403	423	96	2 410
Всего:	9 233	8 259	9 500	7 848	3 569	38 409

	1941 г.	1942 г.	1943 г.	1944 г.	1945 г.	Всего
Сбиты в воздушных боях	2 698	1 718	3 905	2 902	966	12 189
Сбиты зенитками	1 146	541	2 234	2 810	1 748	8 479
Не вернулись с задания	3 500	5 796	3 122	1 926	817	15 161
Уничтожены на аэродр.	1 889	204	239	210	38	2 580
Всего:	9 233	8 259	9 500	7 848	3 569	38 409

Note: 1. The

tables are compiled according to the collection "Air Force of the Great Patriotic War in numbers" (23).

2. The losses of the Air Force fleets and air defense fighter aircraft are not taken into account. 3. The compilers of the collection included more than half of the DBA losses in the losses of the bombers; this can be judged from the fact that the compilers determined the total losses of front-line aviation bombers as 6086 aircraft, and DBA bombers - 2776 aircraft.

## Appendix 10

# COMBAT LOSSES OF FIGHTERS OF FRONT-LINE AVIATION BY WAR YEARS

	1941 г.	1942 г.	1943 г.	1944 г.	1945 г.	Всего
«И-16»	1 207	255	61	-	-	1 523
«И-153»	973	177	40	-	-	1 190
«МиГ-3»	1 214	218	-	-	-	1 432
«ЛаГТ-3»	349	1 101	307	95	-	1 852
«Як-1/Як-7/Як-9/Як-3»	326	1 571	2 296	1 870	689	6 752
«Ла-5/Ла-7»	-	73	1 460	861	312	2 706
«Харрикейн»	1	290	49	1	-	341
«Томахоук» / «Киттихоук»	-	111	96	17	-	224
«Аэрообра»	-	49	305	486	190	1 030
Всего:	4 416	3 888	4 642	3 330	1 191	17 467

Note: 1. The

tables are compiled according to the data collection "Air Forces of the Great Patriotic War in

Numbers" (23). 2. Losses of air defense fighter aircraft and air force fleets are not taken into account. 3. Cumulative losses are greater than the sum of losses by line due to aircraft of other types.

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